THE MIRROR OF VENUS

Love Poems and Stories

Translated by

F. A. WRIGHT

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"Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety."

Broadway Translations

THE MIRROR OF VENUS

Love Poems and Stories from
OVID'S AMORES, MEDICAMINA FACIEI FEMINEAE, ARS AMATORIA, REMEDIA AMORIS, HEROIDAE, FASTI, & METAMORPHOSES

Translated by
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CLASSICAL DEPARTMENT, BIRKBECK COLLEGE

With an Introduction

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TO

A. D.

Felices ter et amplius
quos irrupta tenet copula nec malis
divulsus querimoniis
suprema citius solvet amor die.

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CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION: LOVE IN LATIN LITERATURE 1

SELECTIONS FROM THE EARLY POEMS

The Triumph of Love	*Amores* I. ii. 19-36	43
To his Mistress	„ I. iii. 5-16	44
The Importunate Husband	„ I. iv. 1-10	45
Afternoon Diversions	„ I. v. 1-26	46
The Go-between	„ I. viii. 1-28	48
Love's Campaigns	„ I. ix. 1-20	49
The Fatal Blemish	„ I. x. 1-12	51
The Omen	„ I. xii. 1-6	52
Unwelcome Dawn	„ I. xiii. 1-10	53
The Poet's Wish	„ I. xv. 31-38	54
The Universal Lover	„ II. iv. 9-18	55
The Ring	„ II. xv. 1-14	56
The Lover at the Circus	„ III. ii. 1-30	57
False Oaths	„ III. iii. 1-12	59
The Criterion	„ III. viii. 1-10	60
The Dead Poet	„ III. ix. 1-18	61
The Conflict	„ III. xi. 33-40	62
Juno's Festival at Falisci	„ III. xiii. 7-22	63
The Complaisant Swain	„ III. xiv. 1-6	64
Advice to Wives	*Med. Fac. Fem.* 1-24	65
The Birth of Love	*Ars. Am.* II. 467-480	66
The Preface to 'Love's Remedies'	*Rem. Amor.* 1-16	67
The Country Cure	*Rem. Amor.* 169-198	68
The Cure by Change	„ 471-484	70

CONTENTS

LETTERS FROM THE *HEROINES*

		PAGE
Penelope to Ulysses	*Ep.* I. . . .	75
Phyllis to Demophoön	„ II. . . .	82
Oenonë to Paris	„ V. . . .	91
Hypsipylë to Jason	„ VI. . . .	100
Hypermnestra to Lynceus	„ XIV. . . .	111
Sappho to Phaön	„ XV. . . .	120

EPISODES FROM THE *FASTI*

Priapus and the Nymph	*Fasti* I. 393-440 .	133
Callisto's Punishment	„ II. 155-182 .	136
The Wood-god's Misadventure	„ II. 305-358 .	140
Romulus and Remus	„ II. 383-420 .	145
The Rape of Lucrece	„ II. 761-832 .	148
In Praise of Minerva	„ III. 815-834 .	154
In Praise of Venus	„ IV. 91-113 .	156
The Story of Claudia	„ IV. 305-328 .	158
Proserpina at Henna	„ IV. 425-454 .	160
Flora and the Birth of Mars	„ V. 195-258 .	163
Carna and Janus	„ VI. 107-130 .	167
The Wicked Daughter	„ VI. 587-610 .	169

STORIES FROM THE *METAMORPHOSES*

Apollo and Daphne	*Met.* I. 468-552 .	175
Pan and Syrinx	„ I. 689-721 .	181
Jupiter and Callisto	„ II. 401-438 .	184
Europa and the Bull	„ II. 836-875 .	188
Diana and Actaeon	„ III. 155-209 .	192
Semelë and Juno	„ III. 260-312 .	196
Narcissus at the Fountain	„ III. 407-473 .	201
Pyramus and Thisbe	„ IV. 55-127 .	207

			PAGE
Salmacis and Hermaphroditus	*Met.*	IV. 308-379	212
Perseus and Andromeda	„	IV. 671-764	217
Arethusa and the River-god	„	V. 577-641	222
Tereus and Philomela	„	VI. 438-513	227
Cephalus and Procris	„	VII. 700-752	233
Philemon and Baucis	„	VIII. 684-721	237
The Profitable Child	„	VIII. 843-874	241
The Transformation of Dryopë	„	IX. 334-392	244
Iphis and Ianthe	„	IX. 714-797	249
Pygmalion and the Image	„	X. 245-294	253
Venus and Adonis	„	X. 525-716	256
The Death of Orpheus	„	XI. 1-53	260
Peleus and Thetis	„	XI. 229-265	264
Ceyx drowned at Sea	„	XI. 537-567	267
The Palace of Sleep	„	XI. 592-628	271
The House of Rumour	„	XII. 39-63	274
The Centaur Lovers	„	XII. 393-428	276
The Cyclops in Love	„	XIII. 778-884	279
Circë's Vengeance	„	XIV. 8-67	285
Pomona and Vertumnus	„	XIV. 623-771	289
The Cruel Mistress	„	XIV. 699-757	296
The Power of Time	„	XV. 214-236	299

THE MIRROR OF VENUS

INTRODUCTION

LOVE IN LATIN LITERATURE

I

TO trace the record of the most universal of human emotions, in a literature as extensive as that of Rome, would seem to be a task involving a considerable amount of labour. If we take the year 450 B.C. as an approximate date for the 'Twelve Tables,' and agree that Erasmus is the last important writer who uses Latin as a vehicle for pure literature, we have a period of some twenty centuries and a volume of written work that would tax the resources of the largest library to hold its contents. In the case of many departments of human activity—agriculture, for example, politics, warfare, legal procedure—a large book would be required even for a brief summary of the subject. But it is not so with love; and even a casual survey of our material will reveal at once three facts which, taken together, render

a short survey considerably less difficult than would at first appear.

To begin with, almost all Latin writers who deal with love do so in verse. Petronius and Apuleius certainly describe some manifestations of the passion in their prose, but, speaking generally, love is essentially reserved in Latin literature as a theme for poetical treatment. The romantic prose novel, with love as its chief topic of interest, was invented by the Greeks during the first two centuries of the Roman Empire; but we have no Latin novelist at all corresponding to Heliodorus, Longus, or Chariton. Indeed, the romantic prose novel and the romantic prose play, which in modern times have become the favourite forms of literary expression, in Latin can scarcely be said to exist.

In the second place, even in Latin poetry, love only emerges as the predominant motif during a comparatively short period, the golden age from Catullus to Ovid, a period bounded by the space of one man's lifetime, when the influence of Alexandria on Roman literature was at its strongest. The plays of Plautus and Terence have frequently a pair of lovers among the stock characters whom they inherited from the New Comedy of Menander and Philemon; but it is the broad humour of the one and the worldly wisdom of the other dramatist, not their mechanical love

intrigue, that gives them their permanent value. As for the writers of the Empire—Lucan, Statius, Juvenal and the rest—they are all of them rather rhetoricians than poets, and the tricks of their trade had got so firm a hold upon them that a simple treatment of a simple emotion was for them an impossibility. There are a few isolated pieces, like the 'Pervigilium Veneris,' that herald the flowering of romance, but most of the imperial poetry is in all matters of sentiment an arid waste.

Thirdly—and this is perhaps the most striking point of the three—the Roman and the English conceptions of love move on quite different planes of thought. The influence of Christianity, which turned the Roman vices of *humilitas* and *patientia* into the Christian virtues of humility and patience, has something to do with the change: a second factor is the different view of the relations between the sexes brought about by the mediæval schools of chivalry: a third is the coldness of temperament natural to a northern people, which diverts love into channels of sentiment and hides the grosser elements of passion behind a decent veil. It is unnecessary now to discuss whether these three are the only, or even the chief, reasons: the fact remains that an alteration of outlook has been made; so that at this point, before we proceed further, it may be useful to consider what exactly the word

'*amor*' means in Latin, and what exactly the word '*love*' means in English.

II

In our Oxford English Dictionary there are six principal meanings attached to the word love. The first, and therefore presumably the most important of these definitions, runs as follows: "That disposition or state of feeling with regard to a person which (arising from recognition of attractive qualities, from instincts of natural relationship, or from sympathy) manifests itself in solicitude for the welfare of the object, and usually also in delight in his presence and desire for his approval; warm affection, attachment." The gender of the pronouns is significant, 'delight in *his* presence and desire for *his* approval'; but to a Roman the most remarkable feature of the long sentence would be the total absence of any reference to physical feeling. Friendship, we know, is akin to love, and Catullus in his calmer moments can pray Lesbia for 'aeternum sanctae foedus amicitiae,' 'a sacred compact of eternal affection'; but the two things are not really the same, and if we translated our English into Latin, it would be a description of '*amicitia*'

or of '*caritas*', it would not be a description of '*amor*'.

The second definition in the Dictionary is even further removed from Roman ideas:—"In religious use, applied in an eminent sense to the paternal benevolence and affection of God towards his children, to the affectionate devotion due to God from his creatures, and to the affection of one created being to another so far as it is prompted by the sense of their common relationship to God." In speaking of such ethereal love as this, the word 'amor' in Latin would be quite out of place, and is indeed consistently avoided by the Vulgate which uses 'dilectio' and the verb 'diligo' in preference. In classical Latin, the idea is expressed by 'pietas', that sense of obligation whereby gods protect men and men worship gods, parents nurture children and children reverence parents, citizens serve states and states guard citizens. *Pietas* and *Amor*, so far from being equivalents are often opposites, and on such a conflict the main plot of the *Aeneid* is based. Aeneas, being a Roman hero, is bound eventually to prefer duty to passion, and it is rather curious, considering our high standards of morality, that to English readers his choice seems to stamp him definitely as unheroic.

The next definition is shorter:—"Strong predilection, liking or fondness *for* or devotion

to something." This, of course, although our Dictionary does not expressly say so, is not a real, but only a metaphorical use of the word. When a child says :—' I *love* chocolates ' we recognize a natural exaggeration of speech, and such a phrase as ' love of learning ' is but a similar example of transference. In Latin, as we might expect, ' *amor* ' is occasionally used in this sense ; but the normal word, especially when the object of desire is an action, is ' *studium* ', and when ' *amor* ' takes its place there is usually a conscious straining after emphasis. In any case, however, it is a metaphor, and for our present purpose, therefore, this, the third definition, may be disregarded.

Of these first three definitions of love, then, none brings us very close to what the Romans meant by ' *amor* '. The fourth at last comes nearer :—" That feeling of attachment which is based upon difference of sex : the affection which subsists between lover and sweetheart and is the normal basis of marriage." A Roman would at least have understood the meaning of this in relation to ' amor ', and would probably have accepted the first two clauses as fairly satisfactory, although he might have thought them unnecessarily vague. But he would scarcely have agreed with the last six words. ' *Amor est conubii fundamentum* ' would have seemed to him a paradox and a slightly immoral paradox at that. It is one of

our romantic beliefs that marriages are made in heaven, and that if the sexes mingle freely together a mystic affinity will bring together the predestined pairs. The Romans were more sceptical and more suspicious of human nature, and intercourse between young men and marriageable girls was hedged about with restrictions. A marriage with them was a matter of formal arrangement, the preliminaries being in the hands of the parents on either side, and by a carefully drawn contract, signed, sealed and witnessed, the material interests of both parties were as far as possible secured. Its basis, in fact, was not '*amor*', but '*fides*', that sense of moral integrity and commercial rectitude which forbids an honest man or woman to break an agreement, so long as the other party abides by its stipulations. In this conception of marriage there is no room for sentiment or sensuality, no opportunity for chivalry or romance: it is a pure matter of business and it will be a success or a failure according to the ease or difficulty with which the two partners work together. But it has its advantages, and, on the whole, the stricter forms prevalent in early Italy worked well, so that women at Rome were never reduced to such a position of social inferiority as they were at Athens. It is true that the respect which a woman enjoyed was perhaps given to her rather as a child-bearer than as a wife. Certainly, '*matrimonium*'

means, 'the making a woman a mother,' and the most honourable title that could be given her was not '*uxor*' or '*conjunx*' but '*matrona*' or '*materfamilias*'. If, however, she was a mother her position was unassailable; in the household she took a place only second to her husband, and over her children she exercised a very real control. Yet all this had little to do with the softer emotion of love, and the feeling which Horace's Sabine matron inspired in her husband would be more correctly described by the word '*reverentia*' than by the word '*amor*'.

But it would be very foolish to deny the existence at Rome of many happy unions. Married love was far more possible and far more common in Italy than it had been in Greece, and the close community of material interests, which was brought about by the marriage contract, undoubtedly led in many cases to a union of hearts as well as of purses. With the records of married life, however, literature is not usually concerned. A happy marriage, like a happy nation, has no history. It is one of the most wonderful of nature's miracles, the slow blending of two creatures into one; but it is a long process devoid of incident, and lends itself with difficulty to literary treatment. In actual life there is no monotony in happiness, and a husband and wife who remain lovers find life one long romantic adventure. But in literature, by its very nature,

there is always a mixture of the unreal, so that even our novelists by a wise instinct commonly lead their heroes and heroines to the altar—and there leave them.

Still, we have a sufficiently large number of references to happy marriages, both in Latin poetry and in Latin prose, to prove, if proof were necessary, that there were in ancient Rome abundance both of loving wives and of constant husbands. Ovid, whose third marriage at least was successful, in the *Metamorphoses* tells of three such fortunate couples, Procris and Cephalus, Cëyx and Alcyone, Philemon and Baucis; and in relating their histories he makes it plain that such lifelong devotion as theirs was in his own time no uncommon thing. We must grant that the two Roman husbands of whose private life we know most, Marcus Tullius Cicero and his brother Quintus, can neither of them be exactly described as model spouses; but as an offset in literature to the marital misfortunes of Terentia and Pomponia we may fairly take the signal felicity of Turia's life with her husband Lucretius Vespillo. The so-called '*Laudatio Turiae*', a long inscription on a marble slab, the very slab probably that once adorned her tomb, may now be read in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Vol. VI, No. 1527). It is unfortunately mutilated, but Mommsen's conjectural reconstruction of the missing portions gives a connected and

intelligible narrative, and it is so valuable a document of conjugal affection, lasting for forty-one years of married life, that a summary of its contents may not be out of place here. Although it is in the form of a panegyric, such as was often actually delivered at a funeral, it has a reality of emotion that is usually lacking in such ceremonial utterances, and it derives additional pathos from the fact that the husband throughout addresses his dead companion as though she were still at his side.

"Before our marriage," so the mutilated stone begins, "you suddenly lost both your parents, who were murdered in their lonely country-house. I was in Macedonia at the time, your sister's husband Cluvius in Africa; but owing to your efforts their death was not left unavenged. With such energy did you perform your filial task of tracking down the assassins that if I had been there myself I could not have done more." Then follows an eulogy of his wife's firmness in insisting, under her father's will, that her inheritance should pass under the joint control of her husband and herself, and an account of the success of the arrangement. "But of this," he says, "I leave much unsaid, lest I should seem to be claiming a share in the praise that is due to you alone," and then resumes:—"Such a marriage as ours is rare indeed, one ended by death not broken by divorce; for forty-one

years we have lived in perfect harmony. Would that our long union had reached its last phase by my death, for I was your elder and should more properly have paid my debt to fate! Why should I enumerate now your domestic virtues, your chastity, obedience, kindness, courtesy; how assiduous you were at your spinning and weaving, how truly religious and yet, how averse to all foreign superstitions! You did not dress conspicuously, your manner of life was modest, you performed all your duties to the household most sedulously, and you tended my mother with the same care as you gave your own parents. Innumerable other excellences you had in common with all other honest matrons, but these I have mentioned were peculiarly your own: the fortune of mortals has seen to it that such qualities as yours should be rare." He then relates his wife's bravery at the time of the proscriptions, when his life was in imminent danger, before coming to the last period of their marriage in the peaceful days that followed the battle of Actium, 31 B.C. Their happiness then was only marred by one thing, the absence of children, and he says:—"If fortune in this matter had been kinder, what would have been lacking to either of us? How you attempted to repair our misfortune would seem in other women a thing beyond belief, but in your case it was only in accordance with your other

virtues. Thinking that you were not likely to have children now, and distressed by my childless state, you proposed a divorce, so that I should not, by keeping you as wife, forfeit all hope of descendants. You said that you would gladly surrender your place to another woman who might bear me offspring: you yourself would arrange the marriage for me and would love any children that might be born as though they were your own: nor would you take anything of your own property from the common stock, but would leave everything under my control. I must confess that I was so filled with horror and burning anger at your proposal that I almost went out of my mind. To think that you should propose a divorce before death came to separate us, and conceive the possibility of ceasing in your lifetime to be my wife! What need, what desire had I for children that I should be disloyal to you, and exchange a certainty for a risk? But enough of that. You remained with me; I could not yield to your proposal without shame to myself and unhappiness for us both: it is your glory that you were willing by your unselfish aid to give me the children that you could not bear." And then after some further laments for her premature death he concludes:—"My natural grief deprives me now of all strength and vigour. I am overwhelmed by anguish, distracted by sorrow and weariness.

When I remember our past, and think of what awaits me in the future I fall into utter despair. I have lost my best protector: I brood over the glory that has passed away with you: I seem to have been only spared by fate for misery and regret. You have deserved all the praise—and indeed far more—than any words of mine can give. I can but pray that in the world beneath your shade will grant you peace and calm repose!"

Such in outline is the 'Laudatio Turiae', and as a worthy pendant to it we may take the last, and in some ways the noblest of Propertius' elegies, the poem where he makes the dead Cornelia, daughter of Cornelius Scipio, address her husband Lucius Aemilius Paullus from the tomb:—

"*Cease, Paullus, cease to vex my tomb with tears;*
Dark is the door, nor thy entreaties hears.
When once the corpse has entered death's domain
The roads firm closed with adamant remain,
And though thou beg the lord of this grey hall
On the deaf shore thy tears unheeded fall.
Vows move the gods: when Charon has his fee,
The wan gate shuts the grassy pyre for thee.
Such was the meaning of the trumpet's note,
When from the bier my head the burning smote.
What use our marriage, my ancestral car?
Vain all the pledges of my glory are.
Not e'en Cornelia the Fates would spare;
One hand may lift all that is of me there.

Darkness of doom and thou slow marshy tide,
That clogs my feet and bars on every side,
All guiltless was I, though too soon I came,
And from the Father mercy now I claim.
Let Aeacus ascend the judgment seat,
With urn and lots to give the verdict meet,
And let his brothers there on either hand
In the stern court array the Furies' band.
Sisyphus, be still ; Ixion, thy circle stay ;
Assuage thy thirst, O Tantalus, to-day.
Leave the poor shades, fierce Cerberus, in peace,
And let the chains their endless clamour cease.
I for myself will plead, and if I lie
The Danaids' urn shall be my penalty.

If any wife may boast ancestral fame,
The Afric realm knows our Numantine name ;
From Libo's stock my mother's lineage,
Both houses writ in history's golden page.
When bordered robe gives place to marriage fires
And maiden's locks a woman's coif attires,
Then, Paullus, to thy bed in nuptial state
I came, too soon to leave my only mate.
I call upon my grandsires' glorious dust,
Beneath whose statues Africa lies crushed,
And Perseus whom Achilles' anger woke,
And thou who once Achilles' kingdoms broke,
Ne'er did I slight the censor's stern behest,
Nor make our hearth to blush by sin confessed.

No loss from me did those high trophies get ;
In our great house I too a pattern set.
Blameless my life, in youth and age unstained ;
From torch to torch my honour proud remained.
The laws that nature gave were in my blood,
I needed not a judge to make me good.
Stern though the verdict be when I am tried,
None will be shamed by sitting at my side.
Not Claudia, Cybele's priest serene,
Who drew the rope and moved the crownèd queen,
Nor she whose linen showed a living flame
When Vesta for the fire entrusted came.
Dear mother mine, no harm I did to thee
What wouldst thou wish, save fortune, changed in me?

My mother's tears, the city's sad laments,
And Cæsar's grief—here is my sure defence.
For loud he cried, with tears in eyes divine,
—'Worthy she was to be a child of mine'.
I earned the robe by honoured matrons worn :
It was no childless home whence I was born.
My boys yet live, my solace here beneath,
Paullus and Lepidus closed my eyes in death.
Twice did my brother curule office gain,
His consul's year o'er-clouded by death's pain.
My girl her father's censorship shall prove,
Still, like her mother, constant to one love.
Build up our house : I do not fear to die,
While you remain to swell my destiny.
This is the last reward, our triumph won,
When on the tomb the record writes—'Well done'.

And now our children to thee I bequeath,
Fond thoughts that still within my ashes breathe;
Father and mother to them art thou now,
And round thy neck alone their arms they throw.
So when they come in sorrow to thy knee,
The house thy burden, add one kiss for me.
Let them not see thee in thy love's distress,
But with dry cheeks deceive their fond caress.
Thine are the hours of darkness; thine the pain
Of sleep where visions bring my face again,
And oft expectant for my word's reply
Soft wilt thou speak to her thou dreamest nigh.

Perchance the hall shall see another bed,
And to my couch a second wife be led.
But be not vexed, dear children: praise the bride;
Soon by your love will she be pacified.
Nor praise too much your mother nor compare:
Words over-free a look of malice bear.
But if still constant to the dead he stay,
And think my ashes worth that price to pay,
Learn even now to tend his coming age
And let your care his widowed grief assuage.
The years I lost may they to you be lent,
And in my children Paullus find content.
'Tis well: I never mourned a baby dear;
All your fair company arrayed my bier.

My speech is done. Ye witnesses, arise ;
While grateful earth repays my sacrifice.
To virtue heaven opens : may I win
A voyage o'er those waves to peace within !"
Propertius, IV, xi.

It may perhaps be thought that both these documents prove respect rather than love, and that we might expect to find in Latin literature some traces of warmer feeling than they show between husband and wife. But it must be remembered that of the seven poets who supply us with the greater part of our material Ovid is the only one of whom we can say for certain that he was married. The other six, with the doubtful exception of Propertius, were all bachelors, so that it is not surprising that references to the joys of conjugal love are in their writings somewhat rare. Catullus certainly shows a perception of its possibility in the nuptial ode which he wrote to celebrate the bridals of his friends Manlius and Junia, but neither Lucretius nor Horace nor Tibullus ever enlarge upon the blessings of the married state. Virgil has the episode of Orpheus and Eurydice, but that is more than counterbalanced by the episode of Aeneas and Creüsa, and while the pious hero loves Dido he marries Lavinia. Indeed, of them all it will not be unfair to say that, poets though they be, in this respect they are true Romans and fail to

see any vital connexion between marriage and love.

III

While our Dictionary's fourth definition of love has some application to Roman life, it is more in accordance with English than with Latin ideas. The fifth is based neither on English nor on Latin, but rather upon Greek modes of thought.—"Love—with a capital letter—the personification of sexual affection; usually masculine, and more or less identified with the Eros Amor or Cupid of classic mythology; formerly sometimes feminine, and capable of being identified with Venus. In plural, the multitude of nameless gods of love imagined by mythologists." Certainly Amor is in Latin the equivalent of the Greek Eros, Venus of the Greek Aphrodite, the Cupidines of the swarm of little winged children who attend upon the Cyprian goddess. But all this is borrowed by the Roman poets directly from the Alexandrian Greeks, and such a piece as Propertius' "quicunque ille fuit puerum qui pinxit Amorem" is little more than a pastiche of Meleager and Asclepiades :—

"*Think'st not that he had hands of cunning rare*
Whoe'er first painted Love a little boy?
He saw what heedless beings lovers are,
Losing life's blessings for a trivial toy.

Nor yet in vain those airy wings he gave
And bade him flutter in the human breast:
Truly we toss upon a restless wave
And are by ever-changing breezes pressed.

Nor bears the Boy those barbèd shafts for show,
And Cretan quiver from his shoulders slung;
Dreamless of danger, ere we see the foe
He strikes and leaves his victim torment-wrung.

In me his shafts, in me his image lies
But, sure, his wings of gossamer are gone;
For ne'er, alas! he from my bosom flies,
But in my blood keeps ever warring on."

***Propertius*, II, xii.**
(*Cranstoun's translation.*)

In imitation of the Alexandrians also are the many Latin poems which transfer to youths the emotions normally inspired in men by the opposite sex, such pieces as those which Catullus writes on Juventius, Virgil on Alexis, Horace on Gyges and Nearchus. How far these are mere literary exercises, and how far they express a true feeling, it is impossible now to determine, although in many cases it must be acknowledged that their form is of impeccable beauty. One of the most charming poems in Latin, for example, is that in which Propertius half-humorously warns Gallus to beware lest his

young friend Hylas should suffer the fate of his mythological namesake :—

" This warning, Gallus, for thy love I send,
Nor let it from thy heart unheeded fall.
Thou hast a Hylas too, thy fairest friend,
Whom many a wanton nymph would fain enthral
By Anio's stream, or in the forests tall,
Or at the Giant's Causeway cast her spell,
Or on some wandering river. Shun them all,
Remembering what the Minyae befell,
And listen to the tale which now to thee I tell.

From Pagasae—so runs the story old—
The Argo sailed to Phasis' distant land,
And passing by the waves that Hellë hold
With gliding keel drew near the Mysian strand,
Where on the quiet shore the hero band,
The voyage done, their limbs did gladly lay,
Making them beds of leaves upon the sand.
There Hylas left his knight—ah woe the day !—
And sought the secret streams of fountains far away.

Scarce had he started when the wingèd twain,
Whom Orithyia by the North Wind bred,
Pursued in haste, his kisses to obtain.
Zetes and Caläis above his head

With downstretched hands in flight alternate sped
To snatch their booty from his cheeks of rose,
While he beneath their wings for refuge fled
And waved a branch to scare his treacherous foes,
And so at last escapes and to the wood-nymphs goes.

Beneath Arganthus' crest there lies a spring,
Wherein to bathe the Thynian nymphs delight.
Above uncared-for dewy apples swing,
And water meadows all around are bright
With scarlet poppies and with lilies white.
Childlike he cared not why he had been sent ;
But now would pluck such flowers as pleased his sight
And now in wonder o'er the fountain bent
Enraptured by his beauty's imaged blandishment.

At last, the task remembered, on his arm
He leaned, and in his hands the water took.
At once his beauty did the Naiads charm
Who 'neath the wave their wonted dance forsook,
And, as the lad bent forward, rose to look,
And drew him through the water. Loud he cried
For help. Alcides at his voice awoke,
And from afar with 'Hylas' loud replied ;
But only Echo answered from the fountain side.

Long did the hero seek him on the shore,
Vexing his weary feet against the stone
Of cruel mountains : long the pain he bore,
While every lake he searched and hillside lone,
And to untamed Ascanius made his moan.
Ah that his fate may make thee, Gallus, wise !
Guard well thy Hylas now he is thine own ;
Nor trust our nymphs with so desired a prize.
For Fortune often mocks the careless lover's eyes."
Propertius, I, xx.

Delightful though this is, it is typically Alexandrian in its fantastic blend of satire and romance, and it suffers from that lack of actuality which is the bane of nearly all the Alexandrian writers of verse. Callimachus, Asclepiades, Theocritus, write of love in charming and melodious verse ; but they write in the spirit of the dilettante, not in that of the true lover. Only when we come to Meleager do we find any genuine fervency of emotion. How artificial a love poem can be may be seen in many of the epigrams by Asclepiades and Callimachus still preserved in the Greek Anthology ; even more plainly perhaps in the *Odes* of their greatest Roman pupil, Quintus Horatius Flaccus. In that wonderful collection of occasional verse quite a number of pieces ostensibly treat of ' affaires de cœur ' ; but it may be safely said that not one is inspired by the feeling that we call love. The little fat bald-

headed Epicurean was too much interested in himself, in his art, and in his rôle of moralist, to allow himself ever to be swept away by passion. If love be defined as that feeling which makes a man think a person of the opposite sex more important and more precious than himself, it is probable that Horace, even in his youth, never succumbed to its temptation. The *Odes* are the product of his middle years, and such sentiment in matters of love as they possess is chiefly a feeling of relief at escape from danger. Such is the true motif of the verses to Pyrrha :

O Pyrrha, Pyrrha golden fair,
Tell me your lover, tell his name.
For whom do you bind back your hair
With its red flame,

So dainty simple? Ah poor boy,
He little knows your treacherous charm,
Who hopes from you perpetual joy
Free from alarm!

Alas, how often will he find
That tempests sweep across love's sea,
And that a woman like the wind
Can fickle be.

For me, yon dripping vestments show
How barely I escaped of yore.
And on those waves, if fate allow,
I sail no more.

In all his amatory verse the only real figure is Horace himself: Cinara, Phyllis, Chloë, Lydia, are unsubstantial creatures, some of them perhaps dim reflections of youthful adventures, but mostly phantoms of the study and of the poet's desk. They are not living women of flesh and blood, for Horace never knew a woman well enough to recreate her in literature. As Mr Louis Untermeyer, the most successful of his translators, says:— "Horace is essentially a man's poet, just as he was essentially a man's man. He never troubled himself to understand women in any other than a physical way. He never speaks of the quality of their minds but always of the qualities of their bodies. Their whiteness or redness, their arms and ankles, their warmth or frigidity, seem to be the only things about them which interested him. He never regarded or even recognized them as social beings. They were, to him, so many 'types'; he seems never to have observed them even as individual mentalities. Once in a while he mentions the lower class of women, the peasants, the farmers' wives, with a grudging sort of respect. But beyond that he does not exert himself."

As a serious love-poet then Horace may be disregarded. But as an ironical trifler with a sentiment, which he fears by instinct as dangerous, he is completely in his element, and some of his lighter pieces are the perfection of

'*badinage*'. But they must be translated in his own spirit; in the fashion, for example, in which Mr Untermeyer turns the '*Quid fles, Asterie*'.

Why are you weeping for Gyges?
Your lover, though absent, is true.
As soon as warm weather obliges,
He'll come back to you.

At Oricus, snow bound and grieving,
He yearns for domestic delights.
He longs for the moment of leaving;
He lies awake nights.

His hostess, a lady of fashion,
Is trying to fan up a few
Stray flames of his fiery passion,
Lit only for you.

With sighs and suggestive romances
She does what a sorceress can,
But Gyges—he scorns her advances;
The noble young man.

But you—how about your bold neighbour?
Does he please your still lachrymose eye?
When he gallops past, flashing his sabre,
Do you watch him go by?

When he swims, like a god, down the river,
Do you dry the perpetual tear?
Does your heart give the least, little quiver?
Be careful, my dear.

In these sportive pieces it is highly probable that Horace is exercising his miraculous skill in word-arrangement on an adaptation or free translation from a Greek original. Mr Whichers in his version of *Odes*, I, xxiii, turns Horace's method on himself:—

VITAS HINNULEO

Done by Mr WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

I met a little Roman maid;
She was just sixteen (she said),
And O! but she was sore afraid,
And hung her modest head.

A little fawn, you would have vowed,
That sought her mother's side,
And wandered lonely as a cloud
Upon the mountain side.

Whene'er the little lizards stirred
She started in her fear;
In every rustling bush she heard
Some awful monster near.

" I'm not a lion ; fear not so ;
Seek not your timid dam "—
But Chloe was afraid, and O !
She knows not what I am :

A creature quite too bright and good
To be so much misunderstood.

It would be obviously unfair to apply this method to Horace's patriotic and philosophical verse ; but it is a great mistake to treat his love poems seriously, for he does not take love seriously himself. An avoidance of strong feeling was part of his system of life, and his shrinking from real passion is on a par with all the other restrictions of eating and drinking which, in the pursuit of a reasonable happiness, he thought to be necessary. Love for him was a mere matter of appetite : the wise man curbs his appetite, the fool indulges it to his hurt.

IV

This brings us to our sixth definition :— " The animal instinct between the sexes and its gratification "—which is at last an explanation of what the Romans usually meant by ' *amor* '. Of Platonic love, spiritual love, ' le flirt ', romantic love, they knew very little :

love was for them almost entirely physical, a thing of the senses. Among the curiosities of Latin literature are the six short poems, now commonly printed with Tibullus, in which Sulpicia, niece of Messalla and daughter of Servius Sulpicius, one of the leaders of Roman society in her day, confesses her love for Cerinthus. In them she is as frank as Madame Colette herself in her avowal of passion. She cries indignantly :—

> *" Do you prefer a harlot's bed at Rome*
> *To me, Sulpicia, in my ducal home ?"*

And in another piece she apologizes for a momentary coldness :—

> *" Oh, I am sorry, dearest ! Never yet*
> *Have I done anything I so regret,*
> *As that I played you false the other night*
> *And e'en in love was still an hypocrite."*

Sulpicia is a real person ; but one of Plautus' heroines, Phoenicium, in the *Pseudolus*, writes to her lover in much the same strain :—

> *' And now our love, its ways and whims,*
> *Its close embrace of fondling limbs,*
> *Its talk and kisses, jokes and quips,*
> *Its tender bites at satin lips,*
> *Its straining breasts, its long drawn sighs,*
> *And all its other mysteries—*

These joys, my friend, in twain are rent
Unless some means we can invent ;
And in their place will come to-day
Sad desolation and decay.
You know now all I have to tell :
Art true or false ? I'll see. Farewell.'

This insistence on the physical side of love is the distinguishing mark of Latin literature. To the ordinary gross Roman love was one of the natural functions, like eating and drinking, and performed with as much coarse vigour. In this spirit Plautus' old reprobate in the *Girl from Casinum* sings :

" *There's nothing in the world like love,*
So delicate and flavoury.
The sweetest flower has not its power ;
It is so soft and savoury.
I wonder why cooks do not try
To use it as a spice ;
A tiny trickle our tongues would tickle,
It is so very nice."

Casina, 217, *sqq.*

But to the finer spirits in Rome, who, knowing themselves, dreaded that slavery to the senses, which was the lot of most of their countrymen, love often seemed only an overpowering and tyrannical appetite, as dangerous and destructive as a bodily malady. Horace's attitude we have seen : Lucretius, who, if we

may believe St Jerome, was driven mad by a love potion and wrote the *De Rerum Natura* in the intervals of insanity, enforces the same warning with the seriousness proper to his nature. This is his account of the pathology of love :—

"He who gets a hurt from the weapons of Venus, whatever be the object that hits him, inclines to the quarter whence he is wounded, and yearns to unite with it and join body with body: for a mute desire gives presage of pleasure. This pleasure is for us, Venus: from that desire is the Latin name of love, from that desire has first trickled into the heart yon drop of Venus' honeyed joy, succeeded soon by chilly care; for though that which you love is away, yet idols of it are at hand and its sweet name is present to the ears. . . . The sore gathers strength and becomes inveterate by feeding, and every day the madness grows in violence and the misery becomes aggravated, unless you erase the first wounds by new blows and first heal them when yet fresh, roaming abroad after Venus the pandemian, or transfer to something else the emotions of your mind. . . . As when in sleep a thirsty man seeks to drink, and water is not given to quench the burning in his frame, but he seeks the idols of waters and toils in vain and thirsts as he drinks in the midst of the torrent stream, thus in love Venus mocks lovers with idols, nor can bodies satisfy them by all their gazing upon them nor can they with their hands rub aught off the soft limbs, wandering undecided over the whole body. At last when they have united and enjoy the flower of age, when the body now has a presage of delights and Venus is in the mood to sow the fields

of woman, they greedily clasp each other's body and suck each other's lips and breathe in, pressing meanwhile teeth on each other's mouth; all in vain, since they can rub nothing off nor enter and pass each with his whole body into the other's body; for so sometimes they seem to will and strive to do: so greedily are they held in the chains of Venus, while their limbs melt overpowered by the might of the pleasure. At length when the gathered desire has gone forth, there ensues for a brief while a short pause in the burning passion; and then returns the same frenzy, then comes back the old madness, when they are at a loss to know what they really desire to get, and cannot find what device is to conquer that mischief; in such utter uncertainty they pine away by a hidden wound."

LUCRETIUS, IV, 1050, *sqq.*
(*Munro's translation.*)

So unsatisfactory, according to Lucretius, is love in its physical aspect. But its effects on the mind and the purse are even worse. Love unsatisfied and hopeless brings with it ills past numbering, and even a love that seems prosperous is usually the cause of idleness and expense :—

Think too how lovers wear their strength away
And pass their lives beneath another's sway.
On Babylonian rugs their wealth they spend;
Duty neglected lies, and at the end
Honour falls fainting. But upon her *feet*
Fair Sicyonian shoes all comers greet
With smiling grace, and purple robes worn bare
Drink in the amorous sweat, while emeralds rare

Shed their green light around her set in gold.
To buy her coronals estates are sold,
And Coan gauzes bought for her to don
Consume the wealth his fathers hardly won.
Banquets and games and feasts for her are made,
With brimming cups and viands rich arrayed,
Unguents and garlands : yet 'tis all in vain ;
With pleasure's fount a secret spring of pain
Is ever mingled, and amid the flowers
Something of bitter poisons the bright hours.
Now it is Conscience lifts her wakeful head
And mourns the days in shameful passion sped.
Now in his mind some doubtful word he turns
Which she has spoken ; and with anguish burns.
Or else he sees the traces of a smile
Upon her face, and straight suspects some wile,
And fancies she another would beguile.

Lucretius, IV, 1120, *sqq.*

It is no very pleasant picture that Lucretius draws ; and yet if men regard love as a purely physical appetite—as the Romans usually did—it is to this bitterness of satiety and regret that they will inevitably come. If love is to be the permanent joy that nature meant it to be, it must not be based upon the selfish pleasure of the male but upon reciprocal unselfishness and mutual forbearance. This is where most of the lovers in Latin literature—Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius, for example—go so far astray. They fix their affections, often in extreme youth, upon

a mistress whom they know already by experience to be both unfaithful and unchaste, and then lament incessantly when they find that a miracle has not happened. Their self-pity, indeed, makes most of Latin love poetry rather doleful reading. Few of the Augustans even go so far as the late song writer who says :—

" *An amor dolor sit,*
An dolor amor sit,
Utrumque nescio.
Hoc unum sentio ;
Jucundus dolor est,
Si dolor amor est."

" *Does love mean pain or pain mean love ?*
I do not know.
But this I feel ; if love is pain,
'Tis pleasure too."

Catullus and Propertius, when the first flush of passion is over, are both quite certain of love's nature : it is a burning fire, a consuming malady, a rankling wound, a festering sore, a deadly lethargy ; anything evil that you like to name, but never a blessing or a delight. ' Odi et amo '—cries Catullus :—

" *I hate and love, nor can the reason tell :*
But that I love and hate I know too well."

' Me miserum,' ' O wretch that I am,' are the first words in Propertius' *Cynthia*, and his

preface is surely to our ideas the strangest opening for a book of love poems that can well be imagined :—

Ah woe is me, of passion naught I knew
Till Cynthia's glances pierced my poor heart through.
Love ruthless pressed his heel upon my head,
My eyes cast down, my pride all vanquishèd.
He taught me soon to hate each virgin face
And reckless live in folly's fond embrace.
And now my madness burns for all a year,
While still the anger of the gods I bear.

Milanion, friend, by labours undismayed
Conquered the scorn of the Iasian maid.
See now he wanders in Parthenian caves,
And now with shaggy monsters blindly raves,
Now the Arcadian rocks repeat his groans
As wounded by Hylaeus' club he moans.
But so at last he tamed the flying fair ;
Such power in love have loving deeds and prayer.

With me Love lingers still, nor trys his art
To fly his wonted way, and leave my heart.
Come then ye seers, well skilled the moon to take
And on your altars expiation make ;
Come now, my lady's heart to me incline
And make her cheeks turn still more pale than mine.
Then I shall know to you the power belongs
To draw the stars and streams with magic songs.

And you, dear friends, too late my fall to turn,
Seek me some help ; with madness now I burn.
I will endure the steel, the cruel fire,
If only I may vent my bitter ire.
Take me to distant lands beyond the sea,
While so no woman knows where I shall be.
Do you remain to whom God has been kind
And grants a mutual bliss with tranquil mind.

Love haunts my days ; he never gives me cease ;
And Venus turns my nights to bitterness.
I warn you—shun this hell : constant remain,
Nor let your heart range loosely o'er love's plain.
For if too late you give my words belief,
To you remembrance naught will bring but grief.

Propertius, I, i.

There is something truly pitiable in the position of Catullus and Propertius, for they were both Romans and poets ; in other words they were both the slaves of their senses and the slaves of their imaginations. They snatched greedily at the first easy love that came their way, but they had at the back of their minds an ideal of pure affection to which neither they nor their mistresses could ever attain. The record of this unhappy conflict between spirit and flesh, as they tell it in their verse, has a fascination of its own ; but as space forbids

here even a summary of their misfortunes, I will quote instead the one modern poem—Ernest Dowson's '*Non sum qualis eram bonae sub regno Cynarae*'—which seems to me to correspond most closely to them.

"*Last night, ah, yesternight, betwixt her lips and mine,*
There fell thy shadow, Cynara! thy breath was shed
Upon my soul between the kisses and the wine;
And I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, I was desolate and bowed my head:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

All night upon my heart I felt her warm heart beat,
Night-long within mine arms in love and sleep she lay;
Surely the kisses of her bought red mouth were sweet;
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
When I awoke and found the dawn was grey:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

I have forgot much, Cynara! gone with the wind,
Flung roses, roses riotously with the throng,
Dancing, to put thy pale, lost lilies out of mind;
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, all the time, because the dance was long:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

I cried for madder music and for stronger wine,
But when the feast is finished and the lamps expire,
Then falls thy shadow, Cynara! the night is thine;
And I am desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, hungry for the lips of my desire:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion."

Those who expect, then, to find in Catullus and Propertius many love poems of the modern sort will be disappointed. A converted drunkard after his conversion is hardly the sort of person to sing the praises of wine; and although there are a few pieces in the *Lesbia* and the *Cynthia* collections which paint in glowing colours the mad joys of intoxication, yet taken as a whole both books are manifestos against rather than for love. Ovid is the only Latin poet who seems to have found women, or a woman, permanently attractive, and his is

the only body of Latin verse which treats of love with genuine sympathy. The pieces translated in this volume will show how wide is his range. Whether he is describing the light amours of Jove and Apollo, the innocent courtship of Pyramus and Acis, or the conjugal devotion of Cëyx and Philemon, he is equally happy. He may be sensual, but he is not morbid; he may be vulgar, but he is not callous; he may be frivolous, but he is not sour; he may indeed have all the faults that have ever been attributed to him, but he has one virtue that redeems them all, he believes in love. In Ovid there is no trace of that detestable misogyny which taints so much of ancient literature, and he would probably have agreed with Goldsmith in thinking that a man should be grateful for ever to all women who are both kind and fair.

THE MIRROR OF VENUS

SELECTIONS FROM THE EARLY POEMS

UNDER the heading of Early Poems are here included the *Ars Amatoria*, *Medicamina Faciei Femineae*, *Remedia Amoris*, and especially the three books of short love poems known as the *Amores*, many of them addressed to that 'puella' of Ovid's wanton imagination for whom he devises the Greek equivalent word 'Corinna'.

THE MIRROR OF VENUS

THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE

HEAR my confession, Love : I am thy prey,
My hands are in thy chains, I thee obey.
The fight is over ; now for peace I sue.
No glory is it to crush a fallen foe.
Prepare thy triumph : Mars his car will lend
And for a team her doves thy mother send.
There myrtle-crowned victorious thou wilt ride
And through the clamorous crowd thy chariot guide,
While youths and maidens, led in chains along,
Shall swell the numbers of the captive throng.
I, thy new spoil, will show my fresh-dealt wound
Nor heed the fetters that are on me bound.
The fearful crowd will make the welkin ring
As ' Hail the conquering hero ' loud they sing.
Conscience and Shame, and all that is the foe
Of love, with hands behind them bound will go,
And at thy side as bodyguard shall be
Folly and Madness and soft Venery.

Amores, I, ii, 19-36.

TO HIS MISTRESS

Take me, and I your slave will be
As long as life endure,
Constant in my fidelity
And in your service sure.

Mine is no name of ancient might
Nor have I lands untold ;
My father's but a simple knight
And careful with his gold.

But Phoebus and the Muses nine
Come ever to my call,
And Bacchus, finder of the vine,
And Love, who gives me all.

My life is pure and free from stain,
My heart is sound and true.
No gallant I, of conquests vain,
But faithful still to you.

Amores, I, iii, 5-16.

THE IMPORTUNATE HUSBAND

That husband of yours will be there when we
dine :
May it be the last banquet at which he recline !
Shall I merely look on as a poor harmless guest
And another man feel you all soft on his breast ?
Whenever he likes, shall he stretch out his arm
And touch your white limbs so deliciously warm?
No wonder when Hippodamia was wed
The Centaurs all wanted to have her instead.
I am not half-horse and half-man, it is true :
But yet I can scarcely keep my hands off you.

Amores, I, iv, 1-10.

AFTERNOON DIVERSIONS

It was a summer afternoon : the lattice by my bed,
One shutter closed, about the room a pleasant darkness shed,
Such as in forests oft you see, or when the twilight fades,
Or in the dusk of early dawn, well suited to fair maids
Who love to hide beneath its cloak their looks of modest shame :
And then it was, in tunic clad, Corinna to me came,
Her hair unbound about her neck, presage of future bliss,
More beautiful than Läis or than queen Semiramis.

At once I drew her tunic down—the fabric was so fine
That what it hid a lover's eye could easily divine—

She tried, 'tis true, to stay me ; but 'twas very
plain to see
That in our amorous strife she did not wish for
victory,
And self-betrayed at last she stood, the tunic
flung aside,
In all the flawless splendour of her beauty's
naked pride.

I saw her shoulders and her arms and marked
their loveliness ;
I touched the apples of her breasts made for a
fond caress ;
I gazed upon her bosom and the smooth white
plain below,
Her rounded flanks and slender thighs with
youthful strength aglow.
But why say more, when every part alike was
passing fair ?
Unveiled I took her in my arms and held her
captive there.
You know the rest. Worn out with love
wearied at length we lay.
Such afternoons as this I hope may often come
my way.

Amores, I, v.

THE GO-BETWEEN

THERE is an old hag ; Thirsty Moll is her name
And she's earned it ; a proper old bawd is that same.
She makes it her trade to corrupt honest wives
And on the proceeds of her eloquence thrives.
Last night to my mistress a visit she paid
And safe hid by a door I heard all that she said:—
" Pretty pet, you have captured a millionaire :
Yesterday, when he saw you, O how he did stare !
And no wonder indeed. You'ld outshine all the rest
With your face and your figure if properly dressed.
With the clothes he will give you how lovely you'll be !
And I'm sure, when you're rich, you will not forget me."

Amores, I, viii, 1-4, 18-28.

LOVE'S CAMPAIGNS

EVERY lover is a soldier, and Dan Cupid is his lord :
Every lover is a soldier trained for battle, mark my word.
Mars demands a young man's courage and with Venus 'tis the same.
War and love suit not the aged, bring them nothing else but shame.
Manly spirit, manly vigour in his troops a chief requires,
Manly spirit, manly vigour in her mate a girl desires.
For a captain or a lady both alike must vigil keep
Lying lonely in the darkness and upon the hard ground sleep.
Marching is a soldier's business ; but a lover too will bear
Endless leagues of weary trudging if at last he reach his dear.

Soldiers have to reconnoitre where the foemen's
trenches lie ;
Lovers on their rivals' movements need to keep
a watchful eye.
Soldiers, when a town's beleaguered, if it tarry,
storm the gate ;
Lovers who besiege a mistress break the door
whereat they wait.
Who unless he were a soldier or a lover would
endure
Rain and snow and dreary darkness rather than
to sleep secure ?

Amores, I, ix, 1-20.

THE FATAL BLEMISH

Fair as was she who borne to Troy afar
Became for husbands twain a cause of war ;
Fair as was Leda whose enraptured sight
The cunning god beguiled with plumage white ;
Fair as Amymonë the day she sped
Through the dry land with urn upon her head ;
So fair were you : and timid in my love
I trembled lest each bird and bull should prove
A Jupiter disguised. But now I fear
No more : for now no more I hold you dear.
You ask the cause ? Well, now you charge a fee.
That is the reason why you don't please me.

Amores, I, x, 1-12.

THE OMEN

Out upon it and alack!
  Here's a nasty blow.
She has sent my letter back
  Scrawled across it—'No.'
What a cruel word to bring,
Devil take the horrid thing.

Well, another time I'll know,
  When I deal with women,
I had better credence show
  To an adverse omen.
When I gave the note to Nell
She tripped her foot and almost fell.

If I write another day,
  Prithee, Nell, beware;
When you go upon your way
  Walk with sober care.
Then, it may be, I shall find
That my lady is more kind.

Amores, I, xii, 1-6.

UNWELCOME DAWN

Too soon Aurora brings the day,
  Too soon she leaves the bed
Beneath the ocean where her lord
  Still rests his ancient head.

Why make such haste, O golden queen,
  Thy chariot to uprear ?
This is the hour when most I love
  To feel my darling near.

In the cool breeze the little birds
  Begin their morning song.
But our sound sleep is scarce disturbed
  By the harmonious throng.

Nor men nor maids desire thee yet ;
  Thy dew-wet steeds restrain.
Wait for a while, and in thy car
  Hold back the glistening rein.

Amores, I, xiii, 1-10.

THE POET'S WISH

The flinty rock, the stubborn plough
Must perish with the lapse of time.
But thy bright stream shall ever flow,
O deathless Rhyme!

Kings and their pomp must yield to thee
And Tagus where the bright gold gleams;
To me the fount of Castaly
More precious seems.

The common herd may dross admire:
But let Love's myrtle crown my head,
And Phoebus grant me my desire;
To be by lovers read.

Amores, I, xv, 31-38.

THE UNIVERSAL LOVER

THERE's no certain type of beauty
That my fancy moves.
I can find a hundred reasons
For a hundred loves.

Is a maiden soft and tender,
Modest and demure ?
I burn at once, and for the nonce
Her victory's sure.

But suppose she's pert and saucy,
I am caught again—
" No novice this, an expert miss,
And swift, 'tis plain."

Should she wear a look forbidding
And a Quaker gown,
I swear she'll very soon be willing
Despite her frown.

In fact a learned dame with high degree
And a milkmaid alike have charms for me.

Amores, II, iv, 9-18.

THE RING

Little ring, so soon to be
  Put upon my lady's finger,
Sent a pledge of faith from me,
  Go your way and do not linger,
That my love she understand
When she sets you on her hand.

See you fit her close and tight,
  Clasp her in an embrace zealous
As to clasp her I delight.
  Really, sir, I feel quite jealous.
How I wish that you were I
Changed by eastern wizardry.

Then, if she should slip her arm
  In the bosom of her gown,
I would use the magic charm
  And from off her hand glide down,
Till I came at last to rest
'Tween the roses of her breast.

Amores, II, xv, 1-14.

THE LOVER AT THE CIRCUS

I DID not come the games to view
  Nor yet to back some famous steed ;
I came to sit and talk with you,
  Your presence here is all I need.
For now I have a chance to say
All that I feel for you to-day.

While you are looking at the race
  Or waiting for it to begin,
I shall be gazing on your face
  And hoping that your horse will win.
I you, and you the race will see ;
And so we both shall happy be.

What matter if we're sitting tight
  And pressed together side by side ;
That is the circus' chief delight,
  We could not help it though we tried.
But please, Sir, don't this lady squeeze,
And you, Sir, pray draw back your knees.

Look now your tunic's slipping down ;
I'd better lift it from your heel.
Oh what a naughty jealous gown
So fair a prospect to conceal !
Such legs as these the Arcadian maid
To stout Milanion displayed.

I burned before I saw these sights ;
So think how fierce my fires now glow,
And how I long for those delights
That still to me you do not show.
Methinks if they should meet my eyes
I'd have a glimpse of paradise.

Amores, III, ii, 1-30.

FALSE OATHS

Gods, forsooth ! If gods there be
They would punish perjury,
Nor would my girl so fair remain
When she takes their name in vain.

She would lose the beauty rare
Of the tresses of her hair,
If by the gods she falsely swore :
Now it seems to grow the more.

If there were gods her dainty feet
Would not be so small and neat,
Her body be so slim and tall :
As it is, no change at all.

Well perhaps the truth is this—
If you are a comely miss
A power divine is in your eyes
And heaven smiles at all your lies.

Amores, III, iii, 1-12.

THE CRITERION

No one to-day for letters cares one jot—
'Poems, forsooth! They will not boil the pot'—
Genius was once esteemed above a crown
But poverty to-day proclaims the clown.
My verses pleased the lady, it is true;
But where they went the poet may not go.
A new-made knight, a war creation, she
For his ill-gotten wealth prefers to me.
She praised my book: and then she bars her door—
'He may have talent, yes: but he is poor.'

Amores, III, viii, 1-10.

THE DEAD POET

Weep, Roman Elegy, weep for thy son
  Thine own Tibullus, chiefest of thy fame.
Upon the pyre he lies, his life race done ;
  Weep with loose locks responsive to thy name,
E'en as Aurora Memnon wept of yore,
As Thetis wept Achilles on the shore.

See how in grief the child of Venus goes,
  His drooping pinions and his beaten breast !
With quiver overturned and broken bows,
  The torch once gleaming now to ashes pressed.
His lips are shaken with a mournful sigh
And tear-wet on his neck his ringlets lie.

No more he grieved when from Iülus' halls
  Aeneas his dear brother dead was borne,
And that same sorrow Venus now recalls
  As when Adonis by the boar was torn.
Truly we bards are dear to those on high ;
We too have something of divinity.

Amores, III, ix, 1-18.

THE CONFLICT

I LOVE and hate : I trust you and I doubt you.
With you I cannot live nor yet without you.

Hate and love within my breast
  Struggle for the sway,
Will not give me any rest
  Either way.

Oft to hatred I incline
  Brooding o'er your sins,
Then remember you are mine
  And love wins.

You're a darling, more or less,
  Spite of all you do :
Though I hate your naughtiness
  I love you.

Amores, III, xi, 33-40.

JUNO'S FESTIVAL AT FALISCI

THERE is a grove dark with the forest's shade—
You'ld say that there a god his home has made—
An altar raised by worshippers of old
Still hears men's prayer and does their incense hold,
And when the pipe sounds forth its solemn strain
The annual pomp leads hence its ordered train
Along the flag-decked streets. A joyful throng
Watch the white heifers, as they pass along,
Which in Faliscan meadows oft have fed,
And calves that threaten with unwarlike head.
Old rams with curving horns go slowly by
And pigs, a humbler victim, from the sty.
Only the she-goat doth our Queen abhor:
For by its treachery in days of yore
The place was found wherein she lay concealed
Deep in the forest, and her flight revealed.
Now children's darts are at the tattler thrown
And those that wound her take her for their own.

Amores, III, xiii, 7-22.

THE COMPLAISANT SWAIN

I DO not ask—for you are fair—
  That you should never have a lover,
But only that I be not there
    You to discover.

I am no censor to demand
  That you should always virtuous be,
I only ask that you should stand
    Upon some decency.

The girl who can her fault deny
  Will always at the end be winner;
'Tis she who does for pardon cry
    That's held the sinner.

Amores, III, xiv, 1-6.

ADVICE TO WIVES

MAIDENS, give ear and you shall hear
What is your chiefest duty.
Pray listen well and I will tell
You how to keep your beauty.

'Tis care that makes the barren earth
Produce the ripened grain.
'Tis care that brings tree fruit to birth
With grafting and with pain.

Things that are cared for always please,
And now each man's a dandy,
A girl must be as spruce as he
And have her powder handy.

Med. Fac. Fem., 1-24.

THE BIRTH OF LOVE

At first this world was one disordered frame,
Stars, earth and sea, in form alike the same ;
Till heaven rose and land was girt by sea
And empty chaos endless ceased to be.
Then beasts the forests, birds the air did keep,
And fishes hid within the ocean deep,
While men roamed lonely in the lonely plains
With brutish strength and bodies void of brains.
Within the woods on herbs and grass they fed
And strewed the leaves to make a scanty bed.
No neighbours had they : each one lived apart,
Until soft pleasure tamed the savage heart
When came the day that man and woman stood
First side by side and found each other good.
They knew themselves what was their destined task,
Nor had they need for teachers' help to ask.
Unspoiled by art, love led them gently on,
Apt pupils both, and lo, the work was done.

Ars Amatoria, II, 467-480.

THE PREFACE TO 'CURES FOR LOVE'

When first the title of this book he spied—
'Is it then war between us?'—Cupid cried.
'Nay, nay,' said I, 'that were indeed a sin,
When I so often have your soldier been.'
No Diomede am I who in the fray
Dared to drive Venus with a wound away.
I ne'er have lightly loved, as others do;
Nor need you doubt; to love I still am true.
Let happy swains their mistress still caress
And live rejoicing in their happiness.
But those tormented by a cruel maid
May read this book and in it find some aid.

Remedia Amoris, 1-16.

THE COUNTRY CURE

Few troubles can resist the country's charm :
If you're in love go seek some rustic farm.
There train your bulls the heavy yoke to bear
And turn the stubborn soil with labouring share.
Consign the fruitful seed to Nature's breast
And win in time a plenteous interest.
See how the apples bend each curving bough,
So that the trees can scarce their weight allow.
See how the brooklets murmur as they pass,
And how the sheep rejoice to crop the grass.
How the shy goats upon the hill-side roam
And to their kids with milk at even come.
Hear, too, the shepherd, as his sheep-dogs lie
Around him, piping loud his melody ;
While in the woods some heifer lows in vain
For the lost calf she ne'er will see again.
The rustic knows the time his vines to dress,
To pluck the grapes and tread them in the press.
To smoke the bees from out their plaited hive
And gain himself the sweets their labour gives.

He knows to reap the crops his tillage yields
And rake the gleanings from the close shorn fields.
Spring gives him flowers, summer the harvest's pride,
Autumn brings fruit, winter the fire-side.
These are the pleasures that you may enjoy
If you will come : and then the wingèd boy
Will know his power has gone, and never more annoy.

Rem. Amor., 169-198.

THE CURE BY CHANGE

When Agamemnon saw the captive maid,
Chrysëis, in her priestess' robes arrayed,
He burned with passion and would fain have kept
Her as his mistress. But her father wept,
The silly dotard, and went all about
The camp, and there began to bawl and shout
How she had been disgraced : he did not know
Nature meant maids such bounties to bestow.
So Calchas, with Achilles at his side,
Came to the Greeks and said :—" All ways we've tried,
And all are vain : the girl had best be sent
Back to her father." Therefore back she went.
Then Agamemnon :—" One alike in name,
Save for some letters, and in form the same
Achilles has ; and her I now require,
Since my own girl you've given to her sire.
If he is wise, he will give up his dear
To me : if not he'll find who's master here.

Nor need you Greeks reproach me now, or
blame;
Surely a chief on captives has first claim.
Thersites might as well be king instead
Of me, if I can't take a girl to bed."
He spake. That night Brisëis with him lay;
And so a new love chased the old away.

Rem. Amor., 471-484.

LETTERS FROM THE *HEROINES*

The *Heroines* is a collection of imaginary letters—twenty-one in all—supposed to be written by women to their more or less faithless husbands and lovers. The last six letters, which are arranged in pairs, a letter and reply from Paris and Helen, Hero and Leander, and Acontius and Cydippe, are of doubtful authorship.

PENELOPE TO ULYSSES

ULYSSES, prince of Ithaca, son of Laërtes, father of Telemachus, and husband of Penelope, was for twenty years absent from his home; ten years fighting against Troy, ten years seeking to return. During his absence his wife had to maintain his authority as best she could, and to resist the many neighbouring princes who sought her in marriage. The subject-matter of this letter Ovid draws almost entirely from the Odyssey, but his Penelope bears more resemblance to a shrewd Roman matron of his own day than to Homer's heroine.

THIS letter to Ulysses now I send,
My laggard spouse, that so he quickly wend
His journey home: there is no need to write
In answer; come yourself and glad my sight.
Troy surely now has fallen, Troy abhorred
By Grecian women, and its aged lord
With his proud palace in the dust is laid—
Scarce was he worth the price that we have paid.

Ah! would that wanton Paris, on that day
When he to Sparta winged his watery way,
Had met his death beneath the raging sea.
For then I should not thus deserted be
Alone in my cold bed, while with sad tears
I weep the tardy passing of slow years,
Nor should I need within this widowed room
To cheat the night by working at my loom.

True love is ever fearful. I dreamed more
Of dangers round you than you ever bore,
And thought on you, on you above them all
The fury of the foemen's rage would fall.
At Hector's name my cheeks went deathly pale;
And if perchance I heard the woeful tale
Of young Antilochus and how he fell,
Weeping for him I wept for you as well.
Patroclus slain in armour not his own
Made me lament that guile is oft o'erthrown.
Tlepolemus by Lycian spears struck dead
Renewed my grief and gave fresh cause for dread.

Aye, every Greek that perished was for me
Reason for tears and chilling agony.
But kindly heaven on my love has smiled,
And saved Ulysses for his wife and child.
The Greeks are home, their leaders done with toil,
And now our gods receive the foreign spoil.
Brides bring thank-offerings for their lord's return
And smiling watch the altars brightly burn,
Hanging entranced upon their husband's lips
As he narrates proud Ilium's eclipse,
While elders stern and trembling girls enjoy
To hear the story of the fall of Troy,
Watching him as he draws a battle plan
Upon the board to show how it began,
His finger wetted, that some drops of wine
May Troy and all her citadels design—
"Here flowed the Simöis; here's Sigean land;
Here Priam's lofty palaces did stand;
Here Ajax, here Ulysses lay at night;
Here mangled Hector scared the steeds to flight."

Full well I know the story ; I was told
All that the ancient Nestor could unfold
To our Telemachus. I learned, though late,
Of Rhesus' ending and of Dolon's fate.
That one was slain by guile and one in sleep.
O rashly bold ! Could not my memory keep
You from such daring as to attack the foe,
Helped but by one, and in the night to go
And slay a hundred Thracians, who of yore
The name of ' Prudent ' and of ' Cautious ' bore?
Ah, how I trembled then, ah, how I feared
Until the ending of the tale I heard
That through our camp, which rang with your brave deeds,
You rode triumphant on the Ismarian steeds !

But what avails that Troy has been dethroned
And that her walls are levelled with the ground,
If a war widow lonely still I stay
And my dear lord is ever far away !
Though now there's corn where once great Ilium stood
And the rich ground is fat with Phrygian blood,

Though bones disturbed, start up behind the plough
And in the ruined halls lush grasses grow,
For me alone Troy's battlements remain :
All other women have their men again.
O cruel, cruel ! tell me where you hide
And why my victor tarries from my side.

Each stranger ship that comes unto our land
Is plied with questions, and with my own hand
I write a sheet which they to you shall give
If ever they may find you yet alive.
I sent to Nestor on the Pylian shore :
A doubtful tale I heard and nothing more.
I sent to Sparta : naught could Sparta say.
O, tell me in what land you lingering stay !

Now I regret the vows I made in vain
Better for me if Troy had ne'er been ta'en.
Then others would have shared my sorrow here
And I should nothing have but war to fear.
But now I live in doubt : the field is wide
And terrors close about on every side.

Countless the dangers of the sea and land
And all as reasons for your absence stand.
Perchance I am a fool to be afraid.
You may lie captured by a foreign maid,
And even now be saying how your wife
Thinks that her wool's the finest thing in life.
Oh, may this charge be false, nor you be free
And yet unwilling to return to me!

My father bids me leave my widowed state
And chides me oft because I for you wait.
But though he chides me, I will constant be,
Ulysses' wife am I, Penelope.
Still to my prayers he lends a willing ear
And is content my plea of love to hear;
But there are others who upon me press
And vex me with their wanton naughtiness.
The princes who from steep Dulichium come,
And those who in Zacynthus have their home,
And Samos, from me never will depart
Eating away your substance and my heart,
Pisander, Medon, and Eurymachus
And Polybus and proud Antinöus,
And all the rest, who while you are away
Make of your hard-won wealth their shameful prey,

The beggar Irus, and—O shame most deep—
Melanthius who slays for them your sheep.

Help then the weak : there are but three of us,
I, old Laërtes, young Telemachus ;
And he was late in ambush all but slain
When in despite of them he crossed the main.
Grant in due course, I pray you, powers divine,
That he may close his father's eyes and mine !
My nurse, the neat-herd, and the trusty slave
Who guards the swine are all the help we have.
As for Laërtes, he is frail and old,
Nor can his throne against these foemen hold—
Our son will stronger grow, if the fates spare,
But now he needs a father's help and care—
Nor have I power to drive them from my hall :
Hasten and come as saviour for us all.
You have a child—I pray you find him still—
Who should in youth be moulded to your will.
Think of Laërtes : still he lingers on
In hope that you may close his eyes, his son.
You left me here a girl ; but it will be
An old, old woman soon that you will see.

PHYLLIS TO DEMOPHOÖN

Demophoön, son of Theseus, prince of Athens, while sailing on his way to Troy was driven by adverse winds to the shores of Thrace. There he was entertained by Phyllis, who had succeeded her father Sithon as ruler of the land, and after winning her love promised to return and claim her as his bride. The promise was never kept, and according to a later legend Phyllis was changed into an almond-tree.

Your Thracian Phyllis writes, Demophoön,
Complaining that the promised day has gone
And still you are away, although you swore
Within a month to seek again my shore.
Four times the moon has waxed and four times waned
And yet no Attic barque the beach has gained.
Love counts each day : count also, and you'll see
'Tis not too soon that now you hear from me.

Hope lingers long ; and though alone I grieve
I scarcely yet your treachery can believe.
Oft for your sake to my own heart I've lied
And self-deceived ' Behold his galleys ' cried.
Theseus I cursed, because your steps he stayed,
And yet perchance it was not he forbade—
Or feared lest as for Thrace you trimmed your sails
Your barque had been engulfed by furious gales.
Oft for your safety to the gods I prayed
And on their altars gifts of incense laid,
And when I saw that sea and sky were clear,
I cried :—' If he is well he'll soon be here.'
My love invented reasons for delay
And saw you checked upon your eager way
By obstacles and dangers—dangers bred
By the fond thoughts whereon my passion fed.
But still you linger far, and are not moved
Either by thoughts of her whom once you loved
Or by your plighted vows, which to the wind
You cast that day your sails left me behind.
Ah, me ! those sails have ne'er returned again
And all those plighted vows I find are vain.

What have I done amiss, I pray you tell,
Save that perchance I loved you all too well ?
My only fault is that I took you in ;
And that was kindness surely, not a sin.
Where's now your promise and your plighted troth,
Your vows of passion and your bridal oath ?
Where is that Hymen whom you swore in vain
Vowing that you would always true remain ?
You called upon the restless tossing sea
That you had left, your witness then to be.
You called upon the god, your father's sire,
Who stirs and calms the waves at his desire.
You called on Venus and her potent darts
And those red brands that fire maidens' hearts.
You called on Juno with her mystic rites
Whose torch doth guard the bed on marriage nights.
Come then ye gods nor of your vengeance fail
And let him now before your anger quail.

Ah, I was mad to fit your fleet anew
And give you sails and oarage for your crew!
I have been wounded by my own sharp spear
And you have used my help to leave me here.
I put my trust in your beguiling tongue
And in the race whereto your sires belong
And in your tears—or were they traitors too,
Taught to assist and at your bidding flow?—
And in the gods: pledges you might have
spared,
For by one word I could have been ensnared.

But worse remains: I was not satisfied
With outward succour; I became your bride.
I took you to my couch and loving arms
And let you feast on all my secret charms.
O would that night of shame had never been,
For then I should have died a virgin queen!
I hoped, and did deserve, a better lot,
Nor thought my love would be so soon forgot.
To cheat a maid was no great victory,
You should have spared my fond simplicity.

You tricked the girl who loved you : may the name
Of traitor be the summit of your fame.
Go, set your statue now in Athens town ;
And when men read of your great sire's renown,
Of Sciron, Sinis, and the half-bull half-man,
Of fierce Procrustes, and the Centaur clan,
Of Thebes subdued in war, and the descent
To grisly Pluto's darksome tenement,
Let them next read upon your pedestal—
' He tricked his loving hostess '—that is all.
Of Theseus' deeds that you for model take,
For which alone he must excuses make,
His leaving Ariadne on the isle,
And choose as heritage your father's guile.
I do not grudge the Cretan maid her lot ;
But she a nobler husband now has got
And sits on high and drives her tiger team,
While to my Thracians I an outcast seem,
And those to whom I once denied my bed
Now in revenge refuse with me to wed.

They say :—' She chose a stranger : let her go
To learned Athens now, and time will show
If she was wise. Meanwhile, and from to-day,
O'er warlike Thrace another shall hold sway '—
A curse upon such judgments, where success
Is made criterion of righteousness.
If but your galleys here again were seen,
They'ld cry—' Well done, O wise and gracious
queen.'

But I have not done well. No more you'll come
To dwell beside me in my royal home.
No more when wearied you your limbs will lave
In the cool depths of our Bistonian wave.
Ah, often still I think of how that day,
When your ships ready for the voyage lay,
You dared your arms about my neck to throw
And with long kisses set my lips aglow.
Our tears were mingled and you made lament
That to your sails a favouring wind was sent,
While at the last you cried—' Expect me soon.
I will return, your own Demophoön.'

'Expect,' forsooth : you never meant to keep
Your promise, or again to cross the deep.
And yet I do expect you. Come, though late,
And let the error be but one of date.

But why entreat ? Perchance to-day your love,
Which did to me, alas, so cruel prove,
Another girl possesses for her own,
And from your heart all thoughts of me have flown ;
So that you even have forgot my name
And wonder from what land this 'Phyllis' came.
Well, I will tell you. I am that poor maid
Who, when a sea-tossed wanderer you strayed
To distant Thrace, gave you a place of rest
And to my haven welcomed you as guest.
My purse was yours, yours was my kingdom's store ;
I gave you much, I would have given more ;
All those broad realms where once Lycurgus ruled,
Scarce by a woman's orders to be schooled,

From Rhodope to Haemus forest-grown
And where the Hebrus whirls his wild waves down.
But that was not enough : my virgin zone
For you I loosed, who now are faithless shown.
Yours was the hand that plucked the stainless flower
Of maiden innocence—oh woe the hour !
Tisiphonë attended on my bed,
And the owl croaked in presage o'er my head,
Allecto, serpent crowned, was there that night
And funeral torches shed their baleful light.

Now sad at heart I pace the bush-strewn shore
Where far and wide the waves of ocean roar.
By night and day alike I come to find
Whether the wind to me this time be kind ;
And if at last some distant sail appear
I think the gods have deigned my prayers to hear.
I rush into the sea and scarce abide
To stay my steps before the flooding tide ;
But when the ship draws nigh, I sink and fall
And, swooning, on my maids for help must call.

There is a rounded bay whose cliffs rise high
And seem at either point to touch the sky,
Oft have I thought to plunge into the sea
From thence ; and, since you still are false to me,
I will : the waves shall carry me away
And bear me to your shores, where you one day
Will see my unburied corpse. In cruelty
Nor steel nor adamant nor you can vie
With your own self ; but when you see me dead
Methinks you'll say :—' Some other way instead
Of this you should have found, poor soul, to come;
I did not mean you thus to track me home.'
Oft, too, I've longed for poison, or with knife
Been fain to pierce my breast and end my life,
Or better still to cast a noose around
The neck that in your arms once shelter found.
To-day I'll wait no more, since death alone
Can for my ravished purity atone.
Upon my gravestone shall be writ your name
And these two lines shall brand your deed of shame.
—' Demophoön was cause why Phyllis fell
By her own hand : she loved her guest too well.'

OENONË TO PARIS

Before the birth of Paris, Hecuba, wife of King Priam, was warned in a dream that her child would be a flaming torch of destruction to Troy. The boy was therefore exposed on Mount Ida, and being found by some shepherds was reared as their son. His manly beauty, however, won for him the love of the nymph Oenonë and also marked him out as judge when the three goddesses came down to decide their claim to the golden apple. By the help of Venus he was then restored to his rightful place as Priam's son and took Helen from her husband Menelaus.

And will you read this? Will your wife allow?
Read on: it is no Greek that writes you now,
But I, Oenonë, who upon the hills
Of Phrygia dwelt amid their gushing rills;
'Tis I, your injured love, who thus indite
A letter to you, who are mine by right.

What power divine has ruined all my life,
What have I done that I'm no more your wife ?
Pain that you've earned you bear with patient
heart,
But sorrow undeserved—ah, there's the smart !
You were not then so great a man when I
A nymph consented in your arms to lie.
The truth must out : you then were but a slave
When I to you my earthly godhead gave.
Oft with your flocks we slept beneath a tree,
The leaves and grass a bed for you and me,
Or in some humble cot on beds of hay
Waited until the frost should pass away.
I knew each covert on the country-side,
I showed the places where the wolf cubs hide,
I stretched the nets and drew their meshes tight.
I led the hounds along the windy height,
The trees you cut still keep their marking clear
And all can read ' Oenonē ' graven there.
As the trunks grow, so grows my name withal :
Grow on and keep it for my funeral.

Grow too, thou poplar, by the water dark
That hast this couplet on thy wrinkled bark:
"When Paris shall without Oenonë live,
Then Xanthus' stream shall turn and backward drive."
So turn ye waters and be backward bent—
Oenonë's gone, but Paris lives content.

It was that day your love's cold change began
When the three goddesses came to a man,
Our lady Venus, and Minerva bare
Of all the panoply that makes her fair,
And with them Juno the great queen of heaven,
That judgment on their beauty might be given.
You told me of it, and a sudden chill
Shot through my trembling breast foreboding ill.
I went for counsel to each wrinkled crone
And grey-haired elder: help for me was none.
I feared the worst and saw approaching nigh
Sorrow and anguish and calamity.

Soon for your fleet the lofty firs were felled
And the blue waves your well-pitched galleys held.
You wept to leave me—that you must allow—
And tears of grief from both alike did flow.
I felt your arms about my neck entwine,
E'en as around an elm tree clings the vine.
How oft your comrades smiled to hear you say—
'Head winds again! We cannot sail to-day'—
For gentle gales were blowing from the stern.
How often would you leave me, and return
Yet once again another kiss to seek
And scarce endured the parting word to speak.

And now your canvas fluttered in the wind
And your swift oars left their white trail behind.
As you depart my gaze attends you yet,
And with my falling tears the sand is wet;
I prayed the Nereids—'Bring him o'er the sea'—
You whose return has ruin brought for me.
My vows were granted for my rival's gain;
She has the profit of them, I the pain.

A mass of native rock with towering sides
Looks o'er the deep and fronts the foaming tides.
Thence your returning galley did I view
And longed to throw me down and swim to you.
But while I lingered on your topmost prow
I saw a dress of gleaming purple show,
Nor did it seem such garb as you would wear.
On sped your ship, and as it came more near
I trembled to behold a woman's face,
And — maddening sight — she lay in your embrace.
Then did I beat my breast and rend my gown,
While on my cheeks my nails tore furrows down.
Great Ida echoed with my cries of grief
And weeping 'mid my rocks I sought relief.
So, left by you, may Helen lonely be
And bear herself the wound that she dealt me!

She suits you now, that jade who here has come
Leaving her lawful husband and her home.
But when, a shepherd poor, you fed your sheep
'Twas I, Oenonë, who your house did keep.

I crave no gold, forsooth, nor regal hall,
Nor that men should me Priam's daughter call—
A nymph, 'tis true, is worthy of a king
And no disgrace on Hecuba I bring—
But I deserve, and wish, to be a queen ;
A sceptre in my hands were fitting seen.
Despise me not that once on leaves I lay ;
A couch of purple should be mine to-day.

Remember, too, my love no danger brings,
No deadly war, no ships with vengeful wings.
Strife is the dower your runaway has brought
And Helen by the Greeks in arms is sought.
Go to Antenor or Deiphobus,
Or with Polydamas your case discuss,
Ask Hector or King Priam : they'll agree
That you should give her back ; for well they see,
By years taught wisdom, that one's native land
Before a stolen wench should surely stand.
A bad beginning this : the husband's cause
Is just ; you fight against high heaven's laws

Think not, if you are wise, that she'll be true
Who did so soon forget her vows for you.
As Menelaus cries out on his bed
From which a stranger has his consort led,
So you one day will cry : when virtue's gone
No art can bring it back : once lost, 'tis done.
She loves you now ; she loved him once no less,
Who now, fond fool, is left in loneliness.
Happy Andromachë, who by kind fate
Has won a constant and a loyal mate !
Like Hector you should have been true through all ;
But you are lighter than the leaves that fall
And flutter in the breezes, dry and sear ;
More quick to move than is the topmost ear
Of wheat upon its stalk, that bends and sways
Burnt by the constant heat of summer days.

Your sister warned me once—ah, I recall
Her presage now and her wild looks withal !—
" What art thou doing ? Why thus sow in sand,
And plough with useless oxen barren land ?

Beware the Grecian heifer who shall come
And ruin bring to thee, thy land, thy home.
Sink her foul ship this day beneath the flood
And with it all its load of Phrygian blood "—
She ceased : my golden locks stood stiff with fright,
And from her maids she sped in frenzied flight.

Alas, too true have been her prophecies ;
That heifer now within my pasture lies,
Though she be fair, she has a wanton's mind,
To choose a stranger youth and leave behind
Her home and native gods. Surely, before
To-day she was ravished from her father's shore
By some one—Theseus, was it ?—and I trow
She was no virgin when he let her go.
Upon her first his vigour he would prove.
How do I know, you ask ? Ah, well, I love !
Cloak if you will her fault beneath the plea
Of violence and forced complicity ;
But one so often ravished, I should say,
Herself is pleased to fall and shows the way.

I have been faithful to you, a pure maid ;
Nor with your own coin have you been repaid.
The wanton satyrs oft have sought to take
Me for their own, but hidden in a brake
I have escaped them ; nor on Ida's crown
Could pine-girt Faunus win me for his own.
Great Phoebus too, who built the walls of Troy,
Loved me right well, and gave me to enjoy
His gifts of healing ; every root that grows
And every healing herb Oenonë knows.
Alas that love cannot by herbs be healed
Nor by the art which he to me revealed.
Still, what the fruitful earth may not bestow
Nor god, that aid to you I well might owe ;
And I deserve it. To my bridal bower
I brought no Greeks or bloody strife as dower.
Let us renew our childhood's love again
And I for ever will your bride remain.

HYPSIPYLË TO JASON

When Jason, with the Argonauts, was on his way to Colchis in quest of the Golden Fleece, his galley put in to Lemnos. The island was then inhabited solely by women ruled by Queen Hypsipylë, the men, with the one exception of the old king Thoas, having recently been put to death by their incensed wives. The adventurers accordingly were well received, and on Jason promising to return for her, Hypsipylë granted to him the last favours. This letter is supposed to be written after Jason's arrival in Greece in company with Medea.

They tell me now to Thessaly you've come
Bringing the golden fleece in safety home.
My greetings then : but still a line from you
I might have had, to tell me it was true.
Winds may have checked you though your heart
was fain
To pass my way and see my realm again ;

Yet even then some word you might have sent.
Surely I've earned that much acknowledgment.

Why was it rumour brought to me the news
And not a letter which I could peruse ?
How you had yoked the bulls of Mars, and flung
The seed wherefrom those armèd warriors sprung
Self-slain, and how the sleepless dragon coiled
About the fleece was by your hand despoiled.
Think of my pride if I to doubting ears
Could say—' In his own writing it appears ! '

Neglectful you have been ; but why complain ?
I must be thankful, if I yours remain.
A foreign witch, they tell me, in my stead
Lives with you now and shares your marriage bed.
But love is ever fond : would I were wrong
Nor that such charges could to you belong !
A stranger came from Thessaly of late,
And ere he scarce had passed beyond my gate,

I asked—'How fares my Jason? Prithee tell.'
But at my words his eyes in trouble fell.
I tore my robe and said with bitter cry,
'Is he alive? If not I too will die.'
'He lives,' the stranger answered: but my breast
Was racked with anxious fears, nor could I rest
Until he swore that he had dwelt with you
And I his oath believed that he spoke true.

When I grew calm I begged him tell me all;
And he narrated how at your stern call
The brazen bulls of Mars obeyed the plough;
And how the serpent's teeth your hand did sow,
As seed wherefrom a warrior host arose
Slain by their fellows, so that their death-throes
And birth-pangs both were measured by one day;
And how the snake was conquered. 'Tell me, pray,
Is Jason still alive?' again I cried,
'Twixt hope and fear still swaying with the tide.

But while he told his story, he revealed
The truth which from me he had fain concealed.
Where is thy promise, where that nuptial brand
More fit beside a funeral pyre to stand ?
Mine was no secret love : our marriage rite
Juno and wreathèd Hymen did unite.
And yet, methinks, some Fury, and not they,
Carried the torch before me on that day.

What with the Minyae, pray, had I to do ?
With Argo, or with steersman Tiphys too ?
Aeëtes never in my country dwelt.
Nor could you find with me the golden pelt.
Fate led me on : else it had been my plan
By women's might to expel the stranger, man.
My girls know well the way, and would have been
A sure protection to their injured queen.

But, as it was, I took you to my town
And gave you heart and palace for your own.
Two summers and two winters here you spent ;
And when at the third harvest forth you went,

Compelled at last to sail the foaming seas,
It was in tears you spoke me words like these :—
'Though I must go, God grant I come again !
'Thine am I now and thine I will remain.
'And do thou keep our unborn child, that we
'United both in parenthood may be.'
So did you speak ; and I remember yet
How to more words your tears a barrier set.

And then you went on board, last of your band,
And Argo with the wind flew from my land.
With bellying sail she rides the waters free ;
You shoreward look, and I look out to sea.
There is a tower whose windows face the tide
And give an open prospect far and wide.
Thither I haste, my cheeks with tears all wet
And weeping gaze : my eyes fresh vigour get
From my fond passion, and more keen appear
Than they were wont to be when you were near.
Think then of those chaste tears and timid vows
Which to the gods Hypsipylë still owes.

Nay, shall I pay them for Medea's sake
That she therefrom the benefit may take ?
Shall I bring victims for what I have lost ?
My heart mid waves of love and wrath is tossed.
I was not free from care : I lived in dread
Your sire would choose a bride for you instead.
I feared the Greeks—but to this wound of mine
Is dealt me by a foreign concubine.
A common witch, no decent comely wife,
She cuts her hellish herbs with magic knife,
And draws the moon down from her course begun
And hides in gloom the horses of the sun.
She bridles streams and checks the torrent's race,
The rocks she moves and forests from their place.
She wanders through the graves with hair unbound
And picks the bones from out the smoking mound.
Puppets of wax she shapes with deadly art
And with a pin-thrust stabs some absent heart.

And other things she does which are not well
For honest hands to do or lips to tell.
By looks and love a husband we should win :
That is enough : love magic is a sin.
How can you hold a witch within your arm,
How in your chamber sleep without alarm
While she is roaming, how enjoy one hour
Of darkness when you know her magic power !
As once the fire-breathing bulls she broke
So now she keeps you tamed beneath her yoke,
And as she did enslave the serpents wild
With that same art your soul she has beguiled.

Moreover, to your deeds she adds her name,
And she the wife obscures her husband's fame.
Your foes impute success to some black spell
And all the crowd believes the tale they tell :—
' It was this Phasian wench, not Aeson's son,
' Who by her arts the golden ram's fleece won.'
Ask your good mother, ask your aged sire
If they for kin a northern witch desire.
Let her in Scythia's marshes find a man
Or from the Tanäis or her own clan.

O fickle Jason, lighter than the wind,
Why do your vows leave not a trace behind!
Mine were you once, but mine you are no more.
Let me be yours, as yours I was before.
If you are pleased by names and lineage grand,
My father Thoas, you may understand,
Was son of Bacchus and his Cretan bride,
Whose crown outshines the stars at eventide.
Lemnos with its rich fields will be my dower
And I, with all its folk, will own your power.

I am a mother too: rejoice with me:
The father made my pains felicity.
And by Lucina's grace twin sons are ours,
One pledge of my affection, one of yours.
'Who are they like, you ask?' In them I find
All of their father save his fickle mind.
To you as envoys they were almost sent,
Had not Medea stayed my fond intent,
More cruel than the cruellest stepdame,
Ready for every crime and void of shame.

Would she have spared my babes, who had the heart
To tear her brother's quivering limbs apart
And strew them o'er the fields ? And this is she
Whom, madman, you have now preferred to me !
A maid unwed she harboured at your side.
I was your lawful spouse, an honest bride.
I saved my father's life, she hers betrayed :
She left the Colchians, I in Lemnos stayed.
But what avails it ? Virtue yields to guilt
And on her crimes a marriage bed she's built.

I blame the vengeance that my women wrought
Upon their men of yore ; but still we ought
Not wonder overmuch, for e'en the weak
Goaded by pain will retribution seek.
Suppose a storm had forced you o'er the main,
You and your mistress, to my shores again,
And I had come to meet you with the rest,
My infant babes upon my tender breast,
Surely you would have prayed a chasm wide

In earth to open that you there might hide.
How could you bear your children twain to see
And how endure, you wretch, to look on me ?
Death was the price your treachery should have paid,
But still by me unharmed you would have stayed.
No pity you deserve, 'tis true : and yet
My heart is soft and ready to forget.
But oh, that wanton's blood I would have shed
With eager hand, and cast it o'er my head
And yours, whom she by witchcraft stole away,
Medea to Medea I that day.

And now, if Jove on high attends my prayer,
I ask that she an equal pain may bear,
She who into my bed has dared to steal,
And in full measure my affliction feel.
As I, a wife and mother, lone remain
So may her husband go and children twain.
Her gains ill-gotten may she lose them all,
And exiled for a shelter vainly call ;

To father and to brother cause of woe,
To husband and to children deadly foe,
Let her explore the sea, the earth, the air,
Stained with foul murder, helpless, in despair.

And now enough. My marriage joys have flown
And I King Thoas' child am left alone.
One final word, before this hour has sped :—
" Live on and may my curses haunt your bed."

HYPERMNESTRA TO LYNCEUS

Danäus and Aegyptus, grandsons of Libya, herself grand-daughter of Io, quarrelled, as brothers were wont to do, over their ancestral throne. Danäus was the elder, but Aegyptus had the advantage of fifty sons, while Danäus only had fifty daughters. Aegyptus proposed that the cousins should intermarry, and Danäus, feigning to consent, instructed his daughters to kill their husbands on the wedding night. In forty-nine cases his order was obeyed; but Lynceus was spared by Hypermnestra, who writes this letter from prison, and afterwards took vengeance for his brothers' murder.

Of all your brothers you alone remain;
The rest, by their brides' guilt, are lying slain.
I am a prisoner in close fetters bound;
My kindness has a cruel penance found.
I would not kill you; so I now am blamed
Because to do a crime I was ashamed.

Better be blamed than thus my father please :
For innocence alone can give one ease.
Let him my marriage torch upon me use
And burn me at the altar, if he choose ;
Or pierce me with the sword he did supply,
That, while the bridegroom lives, the bride may die :
Yet never will he force me to repent
My kindness, whatsoe'er the punishment.
Repent ! He and my sisters should begin.
Repentance is the destined wage of sin.

E'en now the thought of that accursèd night
Makes my heart tremble, and I shrink in fright.
You think perhaps I would have murdered you :
I fear to write of crimes that others do.
But yet to tell the tale I will essay—
'Twas twilight, not yet night, no longer day,
When we were taken to our nuptial bed,
To old Aegyptus as his sons' brides led.

Lamps set in gold about us brightly shone
And incense on the unwilling hearth was thrown;
But though the people loud on Hymen cried
Nor he nor Juno to their shouts replied.

At last, while songs of merriment resound,
Wine-flushed, their dripping locks with garlands crowned,
Our bridegrooms burst into the marriage bower,
Where every couch had sudden death for dower.
Heavy with wine and food at ease they slept
While all the town a peaceful stillness kept.
When lo, methought a dying groan I heard!
Nay, 'tis no fancy. 'Tis the thing I feared.
Cold ran my blood; my very heart seemed chilled
And in my bed I lay with horror filled
As the corn quivers in the gentle breeze,
As the leaves shake upon the poplar trees,
So did I shake and more; while you asleep,
Lulled by the nuptial draught, my side did keep.

Yet soon I thought of my stern sire's command
And swiftly grasped the sword with trembling hand.
Three times it rose—no falsehoods will I tell—
To slay you in your sleep : three times it fell.
Let me the truth confess ; the deadly blade
My father gave me to your throat I laid.
But fear and love would not the crime allow,
And my chaste arm refused to deal the blow.
I rent my purple robe, I tore my hair
And murmured my complaint to the still air:—
" Stern is my father : I must do his word.
" This one must join his brethren 'neath my sword.
" 'Tis true that I am but a tender maid
" And from the knife my hand shrinks back afraid.
" But I must pattern by my sisters take ;
" All must be slain, I know, ere they awake.
" Yet, nay : if murder I could ever do
" It were my own heart that I should pierce through.

" They by their violence deserve to die,
" And we endure an exile's misery ;
" But granted their deserts, where's my offence
" That I should not preserve my innocence ?
" What has a girl to do with sword and spear ?
" My distaff and my wool to me is more dear."

Such was my murmured plaint : a tearful tide
Fell from my eyes upon you by my side :
And as you stretched your arms to clasp your wife
You had unwitting almost touched the knife.
Then did I think of what must soon befall,
Of my stern father and his rage withal,
And his fierce minions, and how dawn was nigh ;
And roused you from your sleep with eager cry:—
" Awake : alone you have survived these hours :
Awake : or else eternal sleep is yours."
To action wakened, by our couch you stand
And ask what means the sword within my hand.
' No words ' ; I cry, ' while night allows, away ! '
And so, while night allows, you fly, I stay.

Soon morning came and Danäus counts the slain
And finds that you alone unscathed remain.
He rages that of all his brother's brood
One still is lacking from that tale of blood,
And I am dragged away, in prison thrown,
Haled by my hair. Such wage my kindness won.

'Tis clear that Juno's wrath still haunts our race
From those far distant days when Io's face
Was changed, and she, a wandering steer, was driven
O'er all the earth until she rose to heaven.
And yet, methinks, 'twas punishment enow
To turn a mortal maid into a cow,
And rob her of her beauty, that no more,
Jove should lie with her as he lay of yore.
The heifer stood beside her father's wave,
And saw the horns she never thought to have.
She tried to speak: a bellow came instead:
And shape and sound alike filled her with dread.
Why rage, unhappy maid, why in despair
Count the four feet that now thy members bear,

Thou wert Jove's mistress, but thou now must ease
With leaves and grass thy hunger and appease
Thy thirst in running water. Juno's fear
Has changed the form which was to Jove too dear.
Bewildered thou wilt gaze in fear around
And dread thy new-made horns lest they should wound.
Or on the naked ground in nakedness
Wilt lie, whose wealth once earned great Jove's caress.
O'er land and sea and over all the streams
Whom as his children mighty Ocean deems
Thou wilt essay escape, but all in vain ;
For still thy heifer shape thou shalt retain.
Why haste ? Pursuer and pursued are one,
Thine own companion, thine own guide alone.
Naught will avail thee till at last Nile's river
The union of maid and steer shall sever.

But why repeat a tale of long ago ?
These years have given me enough of woe.
My father and my uncle are at war ;
I live in exile from my home afar.
Of all my cousins only one survives ;
I mourn the dead and those who took their lives.
Brothers and sisters too, I both have lost,
And must lament alike for either host.
But, look you, I myself shall tortured be
To death, because your life was spared by me.
When I for kindness to my doom am sent,
What shall the guilty have for punishment ?
You only live of our fair hundred : all
Have met their death and I with them shall fall.

If for your cousin you have any love
And for my help your gratitude would prove,
Then, Lynceus, come to save me now, I pray ;
Or else, when I from life have passed away,

Put me by stealth upon a funeral pyre
And moisten with your tears my ashes' fire.
And grave these words upon it, for the eyes
Of passers by: HERE HYPERMNESTRA LIES.
SHE SAVED HER COUSIN FROM THE CRUEL SWORD,
AND FOR HERSELF TOOK DEATH AS HER REWARD.

More would I write if I could longer bear
These heavy chains which numb my hand with fear.

SAPPHO TO PHAÖN

According to the prevalent tradition, Sappho of Lesbos in middle life fell enamoured of a youth Phaön, and on his proving unfaithful flung herself in despair from the Leucadian Rock, which lies close to the temple of Apollo at Actium. This letter is written before she finally resolves on the perilous leap. It is one of the most interesting of the series, and some passages may well be taken from poems by Sappho, now lost to us.

I WONDER when your eyes this letter meet
If you will know at once who sent the sheet ;
Or if you could not tell from whom it came
Until you read the author Sappho's name.
Perchance you ask why couplets I indite
Who once was wont in lyric strains to write.
It is that in this verse I find relief
From love, and lyric songs suit not with grief.
For as a harvest-field with wind-borne fire
Burns all unchecked, so burn I with desire.

My Phaön dwells by Etna's fiery fields,
But not to Etna's heat my passion yields ;
Nor can I think of songs in my distress,
A lyric is the child of happiness.

The maids of Lesbos give me no delight
Who dwell in Pyrrha or Methymna's height.
Nor Cydon now nor Anactorië
Nor Atthis even has a charm for me.
Of those my guilty loves not one remains.
You, you alone are cause of all my pains,
So comely to my eyes, so young, so fair
You whose gay beauty did my heart ensnare.
Take lyre and bow, Apollo you will seem ;
With horns, in you a Bacchus we shall deem.
And Bacchus and Apollo both did woo
Maidens who naught of poetry could know,
While in my ears the Muses chant their lays
And all the world is ringing with my praise,
Nor e'en Alcaeus with his loftier songs
Has more of glory than to me belongs.

Though to my body nature's been unkind
She has repaid the balance in my mind.
Though I am short, yet measure my renown
And you will find it high as heaven grown.
What though I'm dark: was not bold Perseus' pet,
His black Andromeda, more dusky yet?
Black turtle doves with parrots green unite,
And pigeons mate together brown and white;
While if you wait until your match you see,
No woman, sure, your bride will ever be.

Nay, when you read my songs, you thought me fair
And vowed my music did enchant the air.
I sang to you—and swift you snatched a kiss:
Ah, how I still recall that night of bliss,
How you approved my lips and every part
And how we did love's work, pressed heart to heart,
While wanton mirth to passion gave new zest,
Swift moving limbs and merry ribald jest,
Until at last, both spent with amorous play,
Mingled in pleasure and in sleep we lay.

But now Sicilian damsels take your eye.
Avaunt, my native land! In Sicily
I fain would be. And if that wish be vain,
Send me, ye maids, my truant back again,
Nor in his flattering promises believe:
As me before, so you he will deceive.
And thou, dear Venus, help me, who dost dwell
Within thy shrine on Eryx' citadel.

Does Fortune always in one tenor go
That I have nothing but continual woe?
Scarce six years old was I, when for my sire,
Untimely slain, my tears bedewed the pyre.
A wanton on my brother fixed her hold;
She stole his honour and she took his gold;
And now he sails the sea, and what he lost
Seeks to regain at endless labour's cost,
While as for me, who warned him 'gainst the jade
My loving loyalty with hate is paid.
Naught do I see, save trouble and annoy:
Even my daughter gives more pain than joy;
All winds alike to my barque are unkind,
And now in you my bitterest grief I find.

Look how my hair unkempt about me clings,
Look at my fingers shorn of all their rings!
Mean is my dress, no gold adorns my head,
No balm of Araby is on it spread.
For why spend time on vanities like these
When he's away whom only I would please?
My heart is one that lightest causes move,
Continual reason for continual love.
Either the fates so ruled my natal star,
And in my loom of life no stiff threads are:
Or else our minds are shaped by what we do
And amorous verse has made me amorous too.

What wonder then if Phaön's youthful cheek,
Fit for a virile passion, I should seek.
I feared Aurora, lest in Cephalus' place
She might in him a second prey enlace.
Had Luna, who sees all, my Phaön spied,
For ever would he sleep by Luna's side.
And Venus would have carried him away
Had she not feared that Mars with him would play.

No longer boy, not yet a man, each year
Makes you more comely and more stout appear.
Come back, fair youth, and my embraces prove.
Love not yourself, but suffer me to love.

Lo, as I write my tears fall down like rain.
Behold these blots, of grief a token plain.
Ah, me! If you had mind from me to fly
You might at least have said one last 'Good-bye'.
No tears of mine, no kisses did you take.
I never dreamed that you would me forsake.
You left me nothing, save my misery:
No token claimed to remind yourself of me.
You did not wait my messages: and yet,
What message could I give save—' Don't forget'.
O by our love—long may it last!—I swear
And by the Muses, once my chiefest care,
When some one said:—' Your joy from you has
flown'
I scarce could call my eyes or tongue my own.
Tears failed the one, and words the other left;
My breast was frozen, of all life bereft.

But when my grief at last had found its way
I felt no shame my anguish to display
With hair dishevelled and with beaten breast,
As when a mother lays her son to rest
Upon the funeral pyre. My brother jeers
At my laments and taunts me with my tears,
And fain some scandal from my grief to spread,
'Why weep,' he cries, 'Your daughter is not dead.'
But love and modesty do not agree.
I rend my robes nor care that all should see.

You, Phaön, are my care: of you I dream
In visions that more fair than daylight seem.
In the brief hours of sleep upon my bed
I hold the lover who from me has fled,
And fancy that your arms around me twine
Or that you rest your darling head on mine.
Warm kisses on my burning lips I feel,
The kisses you would snatch and I would steal,
While in soft murmurs I confession make
Of love, and with my lips am still awake.
The rest I blush to tell—but love's delight
In fullest measure comes to me each night.

Alas, too soon the sun brings day again.
My dreams are scattered, and I loud complain.
Out to the woods for solace then I fly,
Accomplices in past felicity ;
And there like one distraught beneath the trees
Run to and fro, my hair loose in the breeze.
I see our grotto with its hanging stone
That seemed like marble in the days bygone.
I feel the turf where we our bodies laid,
For in the grass a hollow there we made.
I touch the ground where still your trace appears,
The ground that now is moistened by my tears.
I roam the wood which on its verdant sward
A leafy couch to us did oft afford.
But him who was the forest's richest dower,
Its lord and mine, to see I have no power.
The trees are leafless, all their branches bare :
No song of birds delights the silent air.
Only sad Procne for her Itys weeps
And still the memory of her vengeance keeps.
She weeps her Itys, I my loneliness :
A midnight silence on all else doth press.

There is a sacred fountain crystal clear—
Some god within it dwells whom men revere—
A water lotus spreads its branches wide
And verdant turf grows fresh on every side.
Wearied with grief I laid me there to sleep
When lo, the nymph who does its waters keep
Appeared and said :—" For unrequited love
Ambracia will a land of healing prove,
Where Phoebus from the lofty Actian height
Holds all the waves of Leucas in his sight.
Deucalion thence leaped down in days of yore—
With love for Pyrrha he had suffered sore—
Nor any hurt received, but straight was cured
Of the long agony he had endured.
Such is the power that god has given that wave
Leap from the cliff, and healing you shall have."

So the nymph counselled me. Roused by my fears
I started up, my eyes all filled with tears.
Yes, I will go, dear nymph, that cliff to try :
A love like mine drives forth timidity.

Whatever may betide will bring me ease ;
Light is my body, bear me up, kind breeze.
And thou, soft love, thy pinions place beneath,
Lest to the sea I bring reproach by death.
Come quick, O day, when I shall happy live,
And then my lyre to Phoebus I will give,
Inscribed : " This offering to the god I bring
Which shall for Phoebus and for Sappho sing."

And yet why should I from high Actium fall,
When you my wandering footsteps could recall,
A helper stronger than the Leucadian wave,
As fair as Phoebus and as sure to save ?
And though you were more fierce than cliff or sea,
Could you endure the cause of death to be ?
'Twere better on your bosom to repose
Than from those deadly rocks to end my woes,
I whom so often you were wont to praise,
To whom so oft you gave the poet's bays.
Ah, would I now could play the poet's part,
Grief stays my tongue and sorrow dims my art.
No strength have I to-day to wake my lute.
My quill is silent and my lyre is mute.

Ye Lesbian maidens, daughters of the sea,
Already mated or yet brides to be,
Ye Lesbians, whom I loved to my own shame,
Cease now the homage of my harp to claim.
Phaön has swept all that you loved away,
Ah, me, how near ' my Phaön ' I did say !
Let him come back ; and then again I'll sing.
What he has taken he alone can bring.

Do prayers avail to touch that churlish mind,
Or are my words cast vainly to the wind ?
Ah, would that wind might bear you back to me,
For here 'tis fitting, surely, you should be.
And if indeed you votive gifts essay
For your return, why vex me with delay ?
Weigh anchor, and the breeze will speed you on.
The sea is Venus' own dominion.
Cupid himself beside the helm will stand
And spread or furl your sails with his soft hand.
But if you mean from Sappho still to fly—
You have no cause nor any reason why—
Send me a letter, that my fate I know ;
And from Leucadia's rock to death I'll go.

EPISODES FROM THE *FASTI*

The *Fasti*, in six books of elegiac verse, is a gallant attempt to extract material for poetry from the barren ore of the Roman Calendar. It was apparently meant originally to be in twelve books, one for each month of the year; but Ovid gave up the attempt half-way. A comparison with the *Metamorphoses* will show how much more suited to imaginative treatment were the figures of Greek Legend than anything which Rome could produce.

PRIAPUS AND THE NYMPH

THE story of Priapus and the nymph Lotis, who finally found escape from the god by being changed into a lotus tree, has a strong Milesian flavour very suited to Roman taste. The same incident, with Vesta as the heroine, occurs later in the Fasti.

THREE years had passed and now the happy day
Was come, when Greece enjoys her Bacchic play.
The merry gods joined with the mirthful throng,
All they who love the king of wine and song,
The little Pans, the Satyrs swift in love,
And the white nymphs who through the forest rove ;
The old Silenus swift his ass bestrode,
And red Priapus came with phallus rod ;
Their banquet hall an open forest glade,
Their couches soft in emerald grass arrayed.

Bacchus gave wine, each guest a garland sought ;
The stream its waters for the mingling brought.
Naiads were there to minister the feast,
Some all dishevelled, some in splendour drest,
One maid, her tunic girt above her knee,
Another's breast unveiled for all to see ;
From shoulders bared their mantles earthwards flow,
Their feet unvexed by sandals ivory show.
The satyrs gaze, and hot with passion burn,
The pine-wreathed gods to wanton fancies turn,
E'en old Silenus feels the wonted fire,
Nor recks of age in amorous desire.
But red Priapus only Lotis sees
And straight forgets his gardens and his trees.
Her would he have, for her alone he sighs,
Beckons and nods and looks with longing eyes.
But maids are proud, and scorn still suits the fair ;
She mocks his suit and will not grant his prayer.

Night fell ; enwrapped in wine and dreams they lay,
Their weary bodies strewn about the way.
Lotis apart her virgin couch had made,
The revels ended 'neath a maple's shade.
Her lover rises, and on tiptoe steals :
No sound, no movement, as his way he feels ;
He holds his breath, and silent onward creeps,
Until he comes to where the maiden sleeps.
Then softly sinks beside her on the ground,
While still she lies in deepest slumber drowned.
He draws aside her veil in joyful haste
Eager to hold her in his arms embraced ;
When lo, the ass whereon Silenus rode,
Gave forth a bray most importunely loud.
The frightened nymph flung off the waiting swain,
And all his hopes and gathered strength were vain.
Her cries of fear re-echoed through the wood,
And he, revealed in silver moonlight, stood.
The beast by death atoned, and that is why
We slay an ass to-day to Priap's deity.

Fasti, I, 393-440.

CALLISTO'S PUNISHMENT

The story of Callisto, who was turned first into a bear and then into the star Ursa Major, is told by Ovid both in the Fasti *and in the* Metamorphoses.

Of all the woodland nymphs in that fair crowd
Who with Diana to the chase would ride,
Callisto was the fairest, and had vowed
That she a maiden ever would abide :—
" Diana's altar shall the witness be,"
She cried, " of my perpetual chastity."

" Well done "—the goddess said, " in this my train
You will be chief while you shall keep your vow."
And so Callisto did a maid remain,
Nor ever would the joys of wedlock know,
Till mighty Jove beheld her virgin charms
And brought the nymph to bed in his strong arms.

The months sped by and on a summer day
When from the hunt Diana was returning.
Through a dark ilex grove she made her way—
The noontide sun in heaven hotly burning—
And said, espying there a secret pool:
"Come let us bathe within this fountain cool."

The nymphs straightway put off their tunics white
Obedient to her word, and no one tarried.
Only Callisto lingered in affright,
Too conscious of the burden that she carried.
'Dear maiden,' cried her queen, 'be not afraid.'
And knew not that she was no more a maid.

Callisto blushed as thus she heard her calling.
But now no longer could she keep concealed
The fruit of love, for lo, her tunic falling,
The swelling contour of her form revealed.
'Go, perjured wretch'—the angry goddess cried;
'Nor stain with thy foul body this pure tide.'

So was she banished by the huntress queen,
And, ere ten circling moons had waxed and waned,
The virgin as a mother now was seen
And Juno's fury fell on her unchained.
That Jove had done the sin she had no care ;
The maid she changed into a grizzly bear.

Upon the hills for food she went a-questing,
She who had been the great god's paramour ;
While Juno mocked her lord with angry jesting :
" See you your darling's visage at this hour ?
Behold the wanton that you once caressed :
Go, let her hug you to her hairy breast."

So passed the seasons and upon one morning,
When fifteen years had gone since he was born,
Callisto's son, a huntsman danger scorning,
Saw her dark shape and chased the beast forlorn.

She stopped, and knew her child, and stood
distraught,
To think that all her days were come to
naught.

Out came his spear and she would have been
slain
By her own son, had Jove not had regard.
By him as stars to heaven both were ta'en,
And there they shine, the Bear and the Bear
Ward.
But Juno still is wroth, nor will allow
The Bear to dip in Ocean even now.

Fasti, II, 155-182.

THE WOOD-GOD'S MISADVENTURE

If Ovid does not know the real reason for an ancient custom he is quite capable of inventing one. This aetiological fable, purporting to account for the nude ritual of the Luperci, is probably due to his own imagination.

Why merry Faunus shrinks from all concealing
Of limbs, and bids his worshippers to go
Unclad in dance, their naked forms revealing,
Is due to things that happened long ago,
But to a sense of humour still appealing.
The tale is rather *risqué*, you must know;
Still, if you like a joke that's somewhat hoary
Gather around and listen to my story.

It chanced one day the god in silent wonder
From his high hill espied a comely pair
Bedecked in all the pride of eastern plunder,
Hercules the strong and Omphalë the fair.

A gold embroidered robe draped around her,
Upon her shoulders fell her scented hair,
And as the day was warm and he much married
Her gilded parasol Alcides carried.

Old Faunus gazed and burned with sudden rapture.
"No more of rustic nymphs for me"—he cries.
"This damsel for myself this night I'll capture
When in the Bacchic grove she sleeping lies.
Beneath yon cave, when slumber fast has wrapped her,
Beside the purling brook she'll be my prize.
Soon will the evening dews on Tmolus fall
And night's dark steeds obey fair Hesper's call."

Meanwhile the queen, as slaves the feast were making,
Arrayed the hero in a woman's dress.
Her bright-dyed shift as garment for him taking
With holes wherefrom his arms might find egress,

And for his waist the supple corset breaking
That did her body's slender grace confess.
Nor cared she if her sandals scarce would fit
Or that his stalwart hands her bracelets split.

Herself she takes his club and well-filled quiver
And girds about her breast the lion's skin,
And when their meal is done they both deliver
Themselves to sleep nor think of carnal sin.
For on that eve they'd bathed within the river
Ere to their separate beds they entered in.
The reason ? They had both a vow to pay
To kindly Bacchus at the break of day.

'Twas twelve o'clock, when Faunus to the grotto
Came creeping stealthy through the shades of night.
Love made him bold : 'l'audace' he took for motto
And when he saw about him left and right
Men sunk in drunken ease, he murmured, *sotto Voce*—" This is indeed a pleasing sight.
" Till daybreak all this crew will quiet keep.
" I hope their mistress is as sound asleep."

So in he goes to where the dame was lying
Whom he was fain to have at his command,
This daring wooer, and around him spying
With arm outstretched sought for the promised land,
And might have happy been at the first trying
For on her very bed he put his hand.
But when he touched the lion's shaggy hide
He shrank in craven fear and left her side.

E'en as a traveller trembles at the danger
Of viper's lifted fang and moves away,
So did that skin affright our wanton ranger.
And going where the other sleeper lay,
Still to their change of raiment quite a stranger,
He tried again and thought he held his prey.
For now it is a woman's shift at length,
And in himself he feels a giant's strength.

He mounts upon the bed and in prelusion
To his intent pulls at the lady's gown
And finds concealed within it—oh confusion!
A leg with hairy bristles overgrown;

And when with his researches still he goes on
By a shrewd kick he to the ground is thrown.
'Help'—cries the queen awakened by the din
And at her call the servants rush within.

The torches' light reveals the god's undoing
And show him lying on the ground in pain.
'Twas Hercules in truth he was pursuing
And now he knows love's labour was in vain.
The queen makes merry mock of his poor wooing
And all the servants join in the refrain.
Faunus alone was sad. And that is why
To-day he hates all wraps and secrecy.

Fasti, II, 305-358.

ROMULUS AND REMUS

Ovid in the Fasti *returns several times to the legend of Romulus, his escape from death by drowning, his quarrel with his brother, and the device whereby he gained the Sabine maidens as wives for his men. The story of the wolf, here told, was one of Rome's most cherished fables.*

WHAT time her uncle over Rome did reign
The Vestal Silvia brought forth children twain.
'Drown them':—the king gave forth his stern decree,
Nor cared that one of them should Romulus be.
His servants weep, as they his word obey,
And the poor infants on the water lay,
Where Albula, whom now we Tiber call,
Ran swift in flood: over our Market Hall
Boats then were gliding, and our Circus grand
Had more of water in it than of land.
That they should further go the stream forbade,
And thus the one or other of them said:—

"How like they are and both how passing fair!
Yet this one seems the stronger of the pair.
If in men's face their lineage you see,
Some god methinks these children's sire must be.
And yet, if 'twere a god that sowed the seed,
He sure would help them in their hour of need;
E'en though their mother wanted not his aid
Who on this self-same day is childless made.
Poor hapless babes, together were you born;
Together must you die this grievous morn."
So they lamented and upon the ground
The infants placed. Their wailing echoed round.
You'd think they knew, so piteous were their cries.
The messengers returned with streaming eyes.

So in their cradle o'er the waters dark,
Bearing the fate of Rome in their frail barque,
The children floated, till the ebbing tide
Left them safe stranded by the forest side,

Where now the Ruminal Fig-tree we behold,
Called Tree of Romulus by the men of old.
And then—oh wonder—to the babes forlorn
There came a she-wolf who twin cubs had borne,
And far from hurting them in their distress
Gave help and succour to their helplessness.
Those whom a she-wolf tends, shame on such sin,
Were sent to death by their own mother's kin!
With coaxing tongue above the babes she stands
And lets then touch her tail with tiny hands.
They feel no fear, children of Mars confessed,
And drain the wolf-cubs' nurture from her breast.

Fasti, II, 383-420.

THE RAPE OF LUCRECE

One night, during the siege of Ardea, a party of Roman nobles returned to visit their wives and see how they were spending their time in their husbands' absence. Enflamed by the beauty of the chaste Lucretia, wife of Collatinus, Sextus Tarquinius determines to take her for his own.

MEANWHILE the prince with love is all on fire,
Slave to a passion that he yet must hide ;
Her native beauty fans his fierce desire,
Her grace, her golden locks, her milk-white side,
Her voice, the tender words that she replied ;
And though he knows he cannot tempt to sin,
The less he hopes, the more he longs to win.

Cockcrow had gone before the lords return.
And now Lucretia is far away ;
But still with thoughts of her his senses burn
And round her image all his fancies play :
So did she sit, he thinks, so yesterday
She spun her wool, thus were her ringlets drest
And thus unbound upon her neck did rest.

Her words, her looks come back to him again ;
He sees her blushing cheeks, her ivory brow.
Absence inflames his heart's delicious pain ;
'Twas yesterday, but he beholds her now
And the sweet vision sets his soul aglow.
E'en as the sea will not from tossing cease
Albeit the wind that roused it sinks in peace.

And so he yields to thoughts of sinful love,
Planning to take by force her spotless bed.
'Who cares,' he cries, 'success may doubtful prove,
But daring feet by heaven's hand are led
Aright, as erst at Gabii I sped.
I will dare all.' Then to his stalwart side
His sword he girt and off on horseback hied.

That eve he came as kinsman to the home
Of Collatinus, foe disguised as friend.
And she, poor innocent, to see him come
Rejoiced and thought her husband did him send
And that she must a courteous welcome lend.
Supper she made for him who was to be
That very night her treacherous enemy.

For when the feast was done and darkness kept
Men's slumbers, from its sheath his sword he took
And forced the door where chaste Lucretia slept
And o'er her head the gleaming falchion shook,
One hand upon the couch, and ruthless spoke :—
'Behold, Lucretia, this deadly blade ;
I am prince Tarquin and must be obeyed.'

Silent she stays ; no strength has she for words,
Bewildered in a turmoil of surprise ;
Her faltering tongue no utterance affords,
A lamb before the wolf his victim lies
Gazing upon him, with appealing eyes.
What can she do ? To strive she is too weak,
And his fell blade forbids her aid to seek.

Fain would she fly if now she had the power,
But by the bed her cruel lover stands,
Who had by guile assailed the nuptial bower,
And presses down with his relentless hands
Upon her breast within its linen bands,
The breast that till that hour had never known
The touch of any man except her own.

With prayers and threats and promises he plied
her;
But prayers and threats and promises were vain,
Until he vowed that he would lay beside her
Some groom whom he in her embrace had ta'en
And in just wrath the guilty varlet slain.
Then honour made her to dishonour yield
And filthy lust deflowered that stainless field.

Triumphant he rejoices o'er his prey,
His thoughts by fiery passion tempest tossed.
He knows not that his power has passed away
Nor what that night's enjoyment shall him cost,
His kingdom shattered, his dominion lost.
Proud Tarquin, soon thy throne shall be cast
down
And thou with all thy lineage overthrown.

So the day dawned. She sits with hair flung
wild
Like some sad mother mourning by the pyre
Where burns the body of her only child;
Then calls her husband and her aged sire,

Swift from the camp they come at her desire,
And see her plight and fain the cause would know,
—'Who, pray, is dead? Whose hand has struck this blow?'

For long she speaks no word and veils her cheek
All red with blushes in her matron's gown,
The while her husband and her father seek
To staunch the tears that like a stream run down,
Hiding the fear that has within them grown.
Thrice would she speak; and thrice in vain she tries
Until at last with downcast face she cries—

'Shall Tarquin make me dumb as well as shamed?
Shall I to him this second insult owe?
By my own lips my sin shall be proclaimed.
What care I now although the whole world know
The story of my loss and cruel woe?'

Then what she can she tells : her tears reveal
The rest that modesty would still conceal.

Her sire and husband hear the grievous tale
And—' Lo, we freely pardon ' ;—to her cry,
' Against such force no woman could prevail.'
But to their words she sadly made reply—
' The grace you grant I to myself deny.'
Then with a hidden knife she pierced her breast
And at her father's feet sank down to rest.

Fasti, II, 761-832.

IN PRAISE OF MINERVA

The feast of Minerva, which became in the middle ages St Gregory's Day, took place on five days in March beginning the 19th. It was held as a holiday in the schools, and ushers expected then a present from their pupils.

Come now, ye lads and lasses all,
  And sing Minerva's praise.
For those who on Minerva call
  With hymns and tuneful lays
In every art will dexterous be
And trained in all housewifery.

From her, ye maidens, learn to fill
  The distaff with soft wool,
The shuttle use and loom with skill,
  And close your weaving pull,
To cleanse your spotted robes from stain
And dye them in the vat again.

No cobbler can make a shoe
  Unless Minerva aid.
Doctors and humble ushers too
  Give to the virgin maid
Share of your fees and she will bring
New pupils for your offering.

The painter's and the sculptor's art,
  The astronomer's belong
To her : in each she has a part
  And most of all in song.
If I have earned her help, I pray
She guide me still upon my way.

Fasti, III, 815-834.

IN PRAISE OF VENUS

This is a companion piece to the preceding. It is inspired to some extent by the magnificent opening of Lucretius' poem, and has its parallel in the passage on the birth of love from the Ars Amatoria *given in this volume, but the phrasing is Ovid's own and in his most felicitous style.*

VENUS is queen : to her is given
Power over land and sea and heaven.
To her the gods their lineage owe
And we all things on earth that grow.
'Twas she who peopled wood and grove.
'Twas she who taught the world to love.

Ram against ram his horn will press,
Yet woo the sheep with soft caress ;
The bull, whom all the forest fears,
Complacent to his cows appears ;
And e'en the fish beneath the sea
Acknowledge Venus' mastery.

Venus is queen : she did remove
Men's savage ways and gave them love.
A thousand arts from her derive ;
For when to please a maid men strive
They have to show a craftsman's skill
If they would mould her to their will.

A lover first, his suit refused,
The power of plaintive music used.
A lover first on some stern maid
The pleader's cunning art essayed.
It is with Venus songs commence,
And Venus lends us eloquence.

Fasti, IV, 91-113.

THE STORY OF CLAUDIA

In 205 B.C., *towards the end of the Hannibalian War, the priests at Rome produced a sibylline oracle which ordered that the goddess Cybele should be brought from Phrygia to Rome. The ship conveying the sacred image ran aground on a shoal in the Tiber, but was induced to move again in the miraculous fashion here described.*

From Clausus Claudia Quinta drew her race,
Noble alike in lineage and in face,
A virgin chaste though scandal, evil-tongued,
Imputed sins that ne'er to her belonged.
Her robes and coiffure were her real offence
And for her elders lack of reverence.
She smiled at these base rumours, for she knew
Her virtue : so abroad the rumours flew.

Upon that day from out the matron band
She came, and in the water dipped her hand,

And sprinkled thrice her head, and thrice in prayer
Lifted her palms wide open to the air.
The crowd look on in wonder, and suppose
A sudden madness when on knees she goes
And gazing at the image by the prow
With locks dishevelled makes this solemn vow :—

'O fruitful mother, on me pity take
And grant the prayer which I your suppliant make.
Men say I am not chaste : do you decide :
Condemn : in death your verdict I'll abide.
But if you find no fault my witness be,
And drawn by my chaste fingers follow me.'

So did she speak, and swift the hawser drew—
O wonder in our theatre proven true !—
The goddess moved : her verdict sure was given,
And shouts of gladness rise aloft to heaven.

Fasti, IV, 305-328.

PROSERPINA AT HENNA

Proserpina, daughter of Ceres, while gathering flowers at Henna in Sicily, was carried off by Pluto, the brother of her father Jove, and became the queen of the nether world. The old romantic story is a favourite theme for Greek, and even more for Roman, poets.

Near Henna lies a valley deep in shade
Where streams that fall from the high cliffs above
Bedew the ground with moisture. Here the Maid
Attended by her comrades loved to rove,
And on that day she came with feet unshod
And wandering o'er the mead the verdure trod.

With all the hues that nature's palette knows
The grass shone bright, in blue and yellow pied,
Fragrant with every bloom that wilding grows:
Which when fair Proserpine beheld she cried:—

"Come, maidens dear, let's use these shining hours
And carry home our fill of these gay flowers."

Violets and cassia and flowering clover
  And hyacinths and amaranth they pull,
And the red flame of marigold discover,
  And in soft hands green thyme and poppies cull,
And flowers that have no name: their leader
    chooses
Lilies and slender saffron and red roses.

Their girlish hearts delight in the vain spoil,
  While in the busy contest no one feels
The labour of the task nor counts it toil,
  Some gather reeds and plait them into weels
To take the fragile blooms, some keep them
    pressed
In their loose-folded gowns or on their breast.

So eager are the maids new flowers to find
  That soon they scatter wandering far away
And fair Proserpina is left behind,
  No comrade with her, ah, unhappy day!

Dark Pluto sees her and from mortal sight
Bears off his prize upon the steeds of night.

"Help me, O dearest mother, help,"—she calls,
And in her anguish tears her fine spun dress.
But the god takes her to his nether halls
Nor heeds her tears and sobs of dire distress.
Goading to headlong haste his sable team
Themselves impatient of the sun's bright beam.

"Behold thy bounteous gifts,"—her comrades cry
Laden with booty; but their Proserpine
Is far away nor can to them reply
Nor of her place of prison give a sign.
Then with their hands they beat their breasts unbound
And to their wailing all the hills resound.

Fasti, IV, 425-454.

FLORA AND THE BIRTH OF MARS

Flora was essentially a Roman goddess, and her festival was made the occasion of much licentious revelry. Ovid here ingeniously identifies her with a more or less imaginary Greek nymph Chloris, and brings her into connection with the curious legend that attributed virgin birth to the god of war.

A Grecian nymph was I, Chloris my name—
Change but some letters, it becomes the same
As Flora, mark you—and among the Good
Within the Happy Fields was my abode.
How fair I was it scarce beseems to tell:
But to a god I seemed desirable.
For as I roamed abroad one April day
The West Wind saw me, and, though I said nay,
Took me by force, as Boreas before
Took Orithyia on the Attic shore.
Still, for that wrong by wedlock he atoned
Nor have I cause to grieve, as consort owned.

Eternal spring is mine, trees ever green
Earth clothed in herbage, azure skies serene ;
And as my bridal gift and marriage dower
He gave me governance of every flower.
I have a garden where soft breezes blow
And purling streams amid the verdure flow.
Oft have I tried to count the colours there
And oft the task abandoned in despair.
On dewy morns, before the day's begun,
When the gay blooms stand sparkling in the sun,
The Hours come to me in their bright array
And these my gifts within their baskets lay,
While from the beds the Graces blossoms take
That shall for gods on high a garland make.
'Twas I who scattered flowerlets far and wide
And left the sombre earth with colour pied.
'Twas I who wrote young Hyacinthus' name
Upon the leaves that still record his fame.
It is to me Narcissus' glory's due :
Unhappy wight, that he could not be two !
Crocus and Attis and fair Myrrha's son
Owe their repute to me and me alone ;

And through my aid great Mars, the god of strife
—Tell not to Jove this story !—came to life.
Queen Juno, when Minerva first was born
Without her intervention, went forlorn
To tell old Ocean of her husband's spite
And on her way knocked at my door one night.
I asked—'What brings you, Queen, to my poor home ?'
And she explained the reason she had come.
But when to comfort her distress I tried—
'Words cannot heal this cruel wrong'—she cried.—
'If Jove can mother both and father be
And offspring have without regard to me,
Why should I not as well bring forth a child
Untouched of males, a virgin undefiled ?
I will essay each herb, each magic spell,
In earth and ocean and the depths of hell.'
E'en as she spoke she saw me hesitate
And said 'Methinks that in your flowery state
Some potent herb has power to give me aid ?'
Thrice I began to promise ; thrice I stayed

In fear of Jove's revenge 'Help, I beseech,'
She cried; 'no word of this to heaven shall reach,
I swear it by the waves of Styx divine.'
Then I replied—'A mystic flower is mine
Sent me of yore from the Olenian fields
Which every year one only blossom yields.
The giver told me that if I should take
A barren cow one touch of this would make
Her pregnant straightway. So I tried the test,
And soon a calf beside that cow did rest.'
This then I said, and plucked the lingering flower
And touched her with it. Straight its magic power
Begat a child upon her, and she sped,
Her wish achieved, to Thrace, where, brought to bed,
Of Mars she was delivered by the side
Of northern Hellespont and Pontus tide.

Fasti, V, 195-258.

CARNA AND JANUS

To lovers of words the derivations that Ovid is constantly offering in the Fasti *are a source of pure delight. The old Roman goddess Carna had probably the unromantic task of guarding the household's meat; but Ovid prefers either of two more subtle explanations, which would connect her with fountains or with door-hinges.*

By Tiber's stream there lived a nymph most fair
Whom many a suitor sought to make his bride.
To hunt the flying stag her chiefest care
And with her nets to roam the country-side.
Men thought in her Diana's self to see;
And e'en Diana could not lovelier be.

Cunning she was. If any lover came
And begged caresses, thus would she reply:—
"There is no shelter here to hide my shame:
In yonder grotto now, were no one nigh,
Perhaps I might." So to the cave he'ld run,
And when he turned find that the maid had gone.

So did she trick them all for many a while
Till Janus came and took her for his own.
First with soft words he tried her to beguile,
And when, as was her wont, the cave was shown,
Hastened in front. She lingered in the rear
And slipped for refuge to a thicket near.

But ah, she did not know that Janus sees
All that is done before him and behind!
E'en as she hid within the sheltering trees
He hurried back the unwary nymph to find,
And took her in his arms, and held her fast,
Until he had his will of her at last.

Then, triumph won: "Dear nymph, for this caress,"
He cried, "since thou hast deigned with me to lie,
Power over every hinge thou shalt possess
As guerdon for thy lost virginity."
He spake and gave to her the white thorn spray
Which keeps all troubles from our doors away.

Fasti, VI, 107-130.

THE WICKED DAUGHTER

In the early history of Rome the most striking figures are the immigrant Tarquins. The founder of the family obtained the kingship and was succeeded by Servius Tullius, whose two daughters married Tarquin's two sons. The wicked Tullia, whose husband was of a mild disposition, proposed to Tarquin the Proud that they should murder their respective partners and marry one another: which they did.

When Tullia had the marriage won
  Which was for her the price of sin
She ever drove her husband on
  And with fell promptings would begin :—
'Of what avail those deaths,' she would cry,
'If we live saintly, you and I ?

'My sister might as well have lived,
  'Your brother need not have been slain.
'Our partners both might have survived,
  'If we in idle ease remain.

'My father's life, my father's throne
'I give you. Take them for your own.

'That is the dowry which I brought.
'Come, be a man and claim your right.
'By force dominion must be sought
'And crime is appanage of might.
'Go, slay my sire. I'll call it good;
'And dip my hands in his red blood.'

Thus did she goad him, till at last
He sat him in the old king's seat.
War, tumult, murder, follow fast
And massacres in every street.
Tarquin as victor holds the field
And Servius to force must yield.

Yea, he must yield and give his life.
By his own palace he was found
All bloody from the furious strife:
And as he lay upon the ground
His daughter in her carriage fine
Came riding to the Esquiline.

Her driver saw the corpse and stayed
His wheels in pity for the dead,
But on him fierce rebuke she laid :—
'Drive on,' she cried, 'across his head :
'Drive on, I say, and have no fear :
'Your kindness else will cost you dear.'

And so upon her father's face
She trampled in her deadly pride.
O shameful sin, O dire disgrace,
Eternal brand of parricide !
All know it yet, for till this day
That road is called 'The Murderer's Way.'

Fasti, VI, 587-610.

STORIES FROM THE *METAMORPHOSES*

THE *Metamorphoses*, in fifteen books of hexameters, is one of the longest Latin poems, and, after Homer and the *Arabian Nights*, the richest treasure house of stories in world literature. Starting with the evolution of earth from chaos it ends with the apotheosis of Julius Cæsar, and in itself forms the most attractive compendium of Greek mythology that we possess.

APOLLO AND DAPHNE

APOLLO, fresh from slaying the Python with his arrows, mocks at his brother Cupid's puny bow. The little god in revenge fires him with love for Daphne, daughter of the river god Peneus, who rejects his suit, and is by her father changed into a laurel.

THEN from his quiver Cupid took two darts :
One kindles love, one hate in mortal hearts.
The first, sharp-pointed, with a golden head,
The other dull, and blunt, and tipped with lead.
With this he Daphne smote, and then he drew
The golden shaft and pierced Apollo through,
Who straightway burned with passion, while the maid
Was of the very name of love afraid.
Within the woods she dwelt, and in her toils
Caught the wild deer, rejoicing in their spoils,
Like chaste Diana with her hair unbound,
Her home the forest brake, her bed the ground.

Full many a lover sought her for his bride ;
But all she drove unheeded from her side,
Impatient of a man, nor cared to know
The joys that Hymen and young Love allow.
Oft would her father say : ' A husband take—
It is your due—and me a grandsire make.'
But still she shrank from wedlock as a thing
Of evil concupiscence and would fling
Her arms about him and with burning face
In coaxing guise would ask him thus for grace :—
' As Jove Diana, so permit thou me
To live unwedded and a virgin be.'

But though her father yielded to her prayer,
Her own soft body and her visage fair
Forbade what she desired. On a day
Apollo saw the maiden, and straightway
Longed to possess her ; and too soon believed
Possession certain, by himself deceived.
As burns the stubble in a corn field dry ;
As hedges blaze, when travellers passing by

Have built a fire too close or at the dawn
Have left it smouldering ; so the god was thrawn
By fiery passion, and with fancies vain
Must seek at first love's burden to sustain.

He sees her unkempt hair, and fondly cries :—
' What if it were arrayed ? ' He sees her eyes
Gleaming like stars ; he sees her rosy lips
And with another sense would fain eclipse
That lovely vision. And, while he admires
Her hands and naked arms, his hot desires
Imagine hidden beauties in his dear,
Which when unveiled shall yet more fair appear.

But still she flies him, swifter than the breeze,
Nor cares when Phoebus calls with words like
these :—

" Stay, river maiden, stay ; I am no foe ;
Not as a wolf do I a lamb pursue,
Nor as an eagle hunts the timid dove :
The cause of my pursuit's not rage, but love.

How do I fear lest in the thorns you fall,
With bleeding limbs, and I be cause of all.
Rash girl, you do not know from whom you fly :
You do not know ; that is the reason why.
Nay, do not run with such excessive speed,
And then I too shall not such effort need.

I am no common swain, nor do I keep
Upon these hills a flock of bleating sheep.
I am the son of the All Highest ; mine
The realm of Patara, and Delphi's shrine,
Claros, and Tenedos : by me men see
What is, what has been, what is yet to be.
By me the lyre responds to tuneful song.
To me the bow and its sure darts belong :
Ah, that Love's shaft more certain than my own,
Has pierced my heart and to my vitals flown.
Throughout the world all herbs obey my call,
Who did invent the art medicinal :
Alas, that love cannot by herbs be healed,
Or those kind drugs that I to men revealed."

More would he say ; but lo, the timid maid
Fled from his side and left the words unsaid
Yet even than she seemed surpassing fair
As the soft breeze showed all her body bare,
With garments fluttering in the wanton wind,
Her hair unbound and streaming loose behind.
"No more," he cries, "of loving words I'll waste."
Flight spurs desire. He follows hot in haste ;
E'en as a greyhound, when a hare's in sight,
Seeks out his prey, while she in headlong flight
Herself seeks safety, and can scarcely know
Whether she be already caught or no ;
So close the muzzle to her flying heels,
So near the fangs that closing round she feels.

Thus ran the god and maid, she sped by fear
And he by hope, on love's wings drawing near,
Nor gave her time for rest, but with hot breath
Fanned her loose hair and her white neck beneath.

At last her strength was spent, and loud she cried,
O'ercome with terror, to her father's tide :—
" Help me, dear father, by thy power divine,
And change the fateful beauty that is mine."
Scarce had she spoken when a torpor fell
Upon her limbs ; a thin and bark-like shell
Begirt her bosom ; where her hair had been
Sprang forth a maze of boughs and foliage green.
Her face, so fair, took on a leafy dress ;
Her flying feet the clinging tree roots press ;
All, all is changed, except her loveliness.

Metam., I, 468-552.

PAN AND SYRINX

Goat-footed Pan, falling enamoured of Syrinx, pursued the reluctant nymph, who, unable to escape from him, in distress called on her river sisters for aid, and was thereupon by them changed into a tuft of reeds. The story is told briefly by Ovid in the Metamorphoses *in his most lively and vivid manner, but, curiously enough, it is made there to serve the purpose of a soporific. Mercury, sent by his father Jove to slay the hundred-eyed Argus and deliver Io from the bondage laid upon her by wrathful Juno, succeeds with this tale in putting the watchful herdsman to sleep, and then kills him.*

THEN spake the god:—"On Arcady's cool heights
Among the nymphs whom Nonacris delights
One naiad was there, Syrinx called by name,
Fairest of all and most renowned in fame.
Oft would she fly the satyrs, when they wooed
here,
And gods of wood and field who swift pursued
her;

For she a virgin was, of Dian's band,
And girt in Dian's fashion well might stand
For Dian's self, save that her bow was made
Of horn, a bow of gold her queen arrayed :
And even thus she was so passing fair
That it was hard to choose between the pair.

One day, as from Lycaeus she came down,
Pan garlanded with spiky pine cone crown
Beheld her and began to woo the maid "—
Here the god stopped nor then to Argus said
How the fair virgin spurned the rustic god,
And flying o'er the wastes by men untrod
Came to the bank where Ladon's waters gleam
And saw her way barred by the sandy stream.
How then she begged the nymphs to change her form,
And Pan, who thought to clasp a bosom warm,
Found but a tuft of reeds which to his sighs]
Touched by the wind with plaintive note replys.

Nor told he how charmed by the music sweet
Pan cried :—" In union here at least we meet."
And so the pipes unequal, made of reed,
And joined with wax, took then in very deed
The maiden's name, and " syrinx " still are called—
All this he said not ; for by sleep enthralled
He saw those Argus eyes fast closed at length,
And took his wand, and with its magic strength
Deepened their slumber, and while fast he slept,
His curved falchion from its sheath he swept,
And smote between the neck and nodding head.
Forth gushed the blood and Argus falls down dead,
Staining the rocks with gore : his hundred eyes
Can see no more, and sightless there he lies.

Metam., I, 689-721.

JUPITER AND CALLISTO

In no legend does the amoral character of the old Greek mythology appear more clearly than in the tale of Jupiter and Callisto. After the great conflagration that follows Phaethon's rash attempt to drive the chariot of the sun, the father of the gods descends to earth to repair the destruction that the fire has caused. He sees there a virgin nymph Callisto, himself assumes the form of her patron goddess Diana, and in this disguise takes advantage of her innocence. She bears a child, but is left by the god to be shamefully expelled from Diana's company, and then by the jealousy of Juno transformed into a she-bear. Only when her son, grown to manhood, is about to kill his own mother in her beast shape does Jupiter intervene and change them both into stars. The story is told by Ovid with his usual light gaiety; but in itself it is far from being humorous, and is a typical example of those fables that seemed to Plato so objectionable.

And now great Jove surveys his walls on high,
If that the fire had marred their symmetry.
But his firm citadel untarnished stands,
And straight he turns his eyes to mortal lands.
First for Arcadia, his chiefest care,
He wakes afresh the streams that scarcely dare
As yet to flow and bids new grass grow green
And verdant forests deck the ravaged scene.
In eager haste he hurries to and fro
Intent upon his kindly task, when lo
He sees a virgin in the Arcadian glade
And burns with sudden passion for the maid.
She was in truth a nymph most wondrous fair ;
No need had she with art to tire her hair
Or spin soft wool to make her raiment fine ;
Her flowing locks one fillet did entwine,
One clasp her tunic fastened when with bow
Or spear in hand she to the chase would go.
Of all the maids on the Maenalian height
None was more pleasing in Diana's sight,
None had more title to the goddess' love,
Ah, that such favours ever fleeting prove !

'Twas midnoon past : the sun in heaven stood
As the nymph came into the virgin wood.
She doffed her arrows, her stout bow unstrung
And on the grassy sward her body flung
Then of her quiver there a pillow made
And wearied slept, alone, yet unafraid.
The god beheld her, as at ease she lay,
And cried, intent at once on amorous play :—
' My wife of my deceit will never know.
But even if she sees me here below
And in her jealous spite begins to bawl,
I shall not care : the wench is worth it all.'

At once he takes the visage and the ways
Of chaste Diana and approaching says :
' Dear nymph, the best beloved of all my train,
Where hast to-day been hunting ? I am fain
To hear of all thy doings.' ' Mistress mine,'
Replied the maid, ' I greet thee, queen divine,
Who art to me more mighty e'en than Jove ;
I say it, though he hear me there above.'

Jove smiled to see himself preferred like this
In woman's guise to Jove, and gave a kiss
More ardent than a girl's ; then, when she tried
To tell her tale, he drew her to his side,
Holding her closely lest she should escape,
And by his acts betrayed his own true shape.

Callisto strove with all a maiden's power—
Juno had been more kind, if at that hour
She had beheld her—but how with a male
Can a girl wrestle or 'gainst Jove prevail ?
The god was victor, and, his triumph won,
Went back to heaven and left the maid undone.

Metam., II, 401-438.

EUROPA AND THE BULL

The various changes of form that Jove assumed in pursuit of his amours are briefly catalogued in the Sixth Book of the Metamorphoses. *Arachne there upon her tapestry tells how the god as an eagle beguiled Asterië, as a swan Leda, as a satyr Antiopë, as Amphitryon Alcmena, as golden rain Danaë, as fire Aegina, as a shepherd Mnemosynë, and as a snake Proserpina. But, strangely enough, none of these stories is taken as the subject for a separate episode in the poem; and even the tale of Europa, so favourite a subject for sculptors and painters, is scarcely treated with that wealth of pictorial detail which Ovid frequently employs. According to Herodotus, Europa, daughter of Agenor, king of Sidon, was carried off by a Cretan pirate, perhaps the same Captain Bull who seduced Pasiphaë, in revenge for the rape of Io from Argos. But Ovid prefers the more romantic version of the story.*

THEN did great Jove call Mercury to his side,
And, fain his amorous purpose still to hide,
Said to him : " Son, my dear confederate,
Who on my bidding ever loves to wait,
Go now, and quickly, in your wonted flight
And seek the land that Maia holds in sight
Upon the leftward hand : 'tis Sidon named
By those who dwell within its borders famed.
There you will see along the grassy hill,
The royal cattle, grazing, each his fill.
It is my wish that they should driven be,
Down from their mountain pastures to the sea."

So spake the god ; and soon at his command
He saw the cattle heading to the sand
Along the margin of a sheltered bay,
Where the king's daughter oft was wont to play
With her dear Syrian maids. He knew full well
That love and dignity can never dwell
For long together or at ease agree ;
And so he laid aside his majesty,

And ceased to be great heaven's almighty god,
Who makes the world to tremble at his nod,
With three-forked lightning and with sceptre dread,
But turned himself into a bull instead.

Thus to the royal kine he did repair,
And with them lowed and cropped the grass, most fair
Of all the herd ; his skin as white as snow
Untrodden and unmelted, ere it flow
Beneath the rainy south ; his muscles strong
Upon a rounded neck ; his dewlap long ;
His horns, though small, in shape most perfect grown
And more transparent than a topaz stone.
Gentle his eyes, not flashing fiercely keen ;
And on his forehead Peace abode serene.

Agenor's daughter looks with wondering eye
On the kind beast ; nor dares at first draw nigh
To touch him, though so placid he appears.
But soon emboldened she forgets her fears,

And gives him flowers to taste. Presaging bliss
On her white hands he lays a gentle kiss,
And rapt with pleasure scarcely can endure
To check his onset and make triumph sure.
Now he desports upon the grassy plain,
And now, returning to the shore again,
He rolls upon the sand and lets her press
Her hands upon him in a soft caress
And round his horns fresh rosy garlands cast,
Until she climbs upon his back at last,
Unwitting whom she rides. Then from the strand
Slowly the god moves out and leaves the land
And soon, the shallows past, speeds on his way
Across deep ocean carrying his prey.
One hand upon his back, one on his horn
She rests and trembling from the land is borne ;
While as she leaves her native shore behind
Her filmy tunic flutters in the wind.

Metam., II, 836-875.

DIANA AND ACTAEON

Actaeon, grandson of Cadmus, king of Thebes, while wandering in the woods unwittingly discovered Diana at the bath. The goddess in cruel revenge turned the youth into a stag, and in that shape he was torn to pieces by his own hounds.

A VALE Gargaphië lay within that land
  Thick set with pines and dark with cypress wood.
And in its depths, not made by craftsman's hand,
  But due to Nature's art, a grotto stood.
For from the living rock and porous stone
She had carved out its arches all alone.

'Twas Dian's sacred haunt, and on one side
  A bubbling spring sent forth a silver wave
Which made a pool with grassy banks set wide
  Wherein the goddess loved her limbs to lave
When she was weary of the sun and heat
And from the chase was fain to make retreat.

That day into the grotto she did go,
And gave her armour-bearer there to hold
Her hunting-spear, her quiver, and her bow,
Its string relaxed, fashioned of shining gold.
One nymph stood helping till she was ungowned,
Two more her sandals from her feet unbound.

Then Theban Crocalë with fingers deft
Ties in a knot her lady's loosened hair,
Albeit her own to stream at ease is left;
While others in their urns fresh water bear;
Psecas, and Rhanis, and young Hyalë
And with them Nephelë and Phialë.

But as Diana the cool wave was cleaving
Actaeon wandered through the unknown grove
With doubtful steps, his wonted labours leaving,
And came into the cave. The fates above
Decreed it should be so; nor did he know
What thing that grotto to his eyes would show.

Loud shrieked the nymphs when they the stranger sighted.
And beating their bare breasts in terror cried
And thronging round their queen, a band affrighted,
Sought from his gaze her nakedness to hide.
But 'twas in vain : the goddess was too tall
And head and shoulders stood above them all.

Red as the clouds upon a summer evening,
Red as the dawn was fair Diana's cheek
As there she stood, no veils her beauty screening,
And turning back looked round her shafts to seek.
No arrows had she near ; so in their place
She threw bright drops of water in his face.

And as she cast the vengeful stream upon him
And saw his visage moistened by the foam
She turned again and looking sternly on him
Spoke him these words in presage of his doom :—
" Go—if you can—and say that you have seen
The naked body of the huntress queen."

No more she said : the water's touch he felt
And from his head stag's horns at once did grow ;
His ears grew sharp, his skin a dappled pelt,
Arms turned to legs, and hands to hoofs below ;
While on his heart a beast-like terror fell
And swift in flight he bounded down the dell.

In a clear pool he sees his transformed face.
' Alas ' he tries to say ; but no words come.
A muffled groan of utterance takes the place ;
And yet his mind remains. Shall he go home
Or lurk concealed within the forest drear ?
Shame bars the one way and the other fear.

But as he stands perplexed, he sights the hounds
And flies before those whom so oft he led.
With their fierce baying the wide wood resounds,
And swift the pack upon their master sped
And tore him limb from limb while all the air
Rang with his cries of terror and despair.

Metam., III, 155-209.

SEMELË AND JUNO

Semelë, daughter of Cadmus, beguiled by jealous Juno, prayed her lover Jove to appear before her in his full majesty. Constrained by his oath the god unwillingly consented, and Semelë perished in the overpowering radiance of his divinity. Her unborn child however was taken from her body, and till the due season kept in his father's thigh. The story is interesting, both in itself and as an explanation of the doubtful position held by Dionysus in the divine hierarchy. The son of a god and goddess, Hephaestus, for example, is indisputably a god; and so also may be the son of a god and a nymph. But the son of a god and a mortal woman is not a god but a hero; although in exceptional cases, as with Heracles and Aesculapius, he may be taken into heaven. Dionysus is so far unique that his divine father performed for him some of a mother's functions.

That day queen Juno learned a child on earth
Of Jove's own seed was coming quick to birth,
And once again with jealous wrath on fire
Debated how she might assuage her ire.
'Reproaches are in vain with Jove,' she cried :—
'Too oft on him my anger I have tried.
Against the woman rather will I go ;
And if in me men mighty Juno know,
To whom by right is heaven's high command
With starry sceptre in my strong right hand,
Sister and wife of Jove,—a sister true
Though scarce a wife—then yonder wench shall rue
This hour, and to me retribution pay.
For 'twas not that in secret love she lay
Or brief her crime : she has surpassed the rest,
And in her body which my spouse caressed
There lies a child conceived, a gift to me
But seldom granted, and she means to be
By Jove a mother, of her beauty vain
Which yet shall be her ruin. Ne'er again
Call me great Saturn's child unless she fall,
Swift to her doom ; and sent by Jove withal.'

Therewith she rose, and wrapped in golden cloud
Went to the place where Semelë abode.
But first she dimmed the light that from her shone
And changed herself to seem an ancient crone
With wrinkled skin, white hair, and feeble walk,
Bent in each limb, and mumbling in her talk,
In outward shape the very image she
Of Semelë's own nurse, old Beroë.

In parley long the hours sped quickly by
Till to Jove's name they came. Then, with a sigh,
" I hope," she said, " that he indeed is Jove,
But yet I fear ; for men are cheats in love
And many a maid, with high flown talk beguiled
Of gods and such like, finds herself with child.
Yet be he very Jove, 'tis not enow.
Let him a proof of his affection show,
And in such splendour come to your embrace.
As when he meets his Juno face to face.
Bid him to don his royal panoply
And let you see him in full majesty."

Thus did the goddess prompt the guileless maid ;
And Semelë at Jove's next visit said :—
" Grant me a boon nor ask me now to tell
What it may be I deem desirable."
"Have what you will," he cried, " all, all is thine :
Fear not, I swear it by the power divine
Of Stygian streams ; and e'en the sons of heaven
May never break that oath when once 'tis given."

Then answered Semelë, through love too kind
So soon to perish and her death to find
By his compliance :—" As within her bower
Your Juno sees you at love's ritual hour,
So come to me." Fain had he her forestalled ;
But neither wish nor oath can be recalled.
In deep distress the god to heaven rose
And gathers round about him, as he goes,
The clouds that ever on his frown attend,
Lightnings, and storms, and those fierce winds
that send
On men destruction, and to end the tale
His thunder and the bolt that ne'er may fail.

Yet, where he can, he lessens his due part
Of majesty, nor takes that potent dart
Wherewith he smote upon Typhöeus' head
And hurled him from the sky, but in its stead
The lighter bolt, which gods ' The Second ' call,
Less wildly blazing and less fierce withal.
Therein arrayed to Agenor's halls he came
And his poor lover. But no mortal frame
The tumult of his advent could survive
Nor in the glory of his presence live.
Her bridal gift brought death. The babe unborn
By Jove's own hand was from her body torn
And sewn within his thigh, where safe it lay
Till the months passed and came its natal day.

Metam., III, 260-312.

NARCISSUS AT THE FOUNTAIN

The nymph Echo, Jove's confederate, after being punished by Juno with the partial loss of speech, fell in love with the boy Narcissus, and when he scorned her faded away into the voice we know. The retribution that came upon Narcissus is told here and by Lord Bacon:—"It fatally so chanced that Narcissus came to a clear fountain, upon the banks whereof he lay him down to repose him in the heat of the day; and having espied the shadow of his own face in the water was so besotted and ravished with the contemplation and admiration thereof, that he by no means possible could be drawn from beholding his image in this glass; insomuch that by continually gazing thereupon he pined away to nothing, and was at last turned into a flower of his own name, which appears in the beginning of spring, and is sacred to the infernal powers, Plato, Proserpina and the Furies."

THERE was a pool with silvery water bright,
To which no neat herd e'er his cattle drave;
No she-goats feeding on the mountain height,
Nor wandering sheep disturbed the unruffled wave.
No bird or beast came near its thirst to fill,
No falling branches broke the mirror still.

Worn with the chase, Narcissus laid him down
In the lush grass that grew along the brink,
Beneath the shadow by cool poplars thrown,
And stooping o'er the spring prepared to drink.
When lo! another beauty met his gaze
That did another thirst within him raise.

For as he bent a wonder came to view:
An imaged face that set his heart on fire;
An incorporeal hope, a joy untrue,
Shadow of substance, phantom of desire.
Entranced he lies in ecstasy alone
Like some slim statue carved of Parian stone.

Flung down he marvels at those stars, his eyes,
And at his locks than Bacchus' own more fair ;
He sees the roses and the ivories
Of neck and cheek and lips beyond compare.
Now loves he that which others in him love,
And on himself his passion fain would prove.

How often did he stoop to kiss the pool
That mocked his lips ; how often with his arm
Seek in the depths beneath the surface cool
To draw towards his lips the shadowed charm.
He knows not what he sees ; but still he burns,
And to the fond illusion still returns.

O foolish boy, why seek to clasp in vain
A fleeting image ! Nowhere wilt thou find
Thy heart's desire ; nothing will remain
Shouldst thou endure to leave the pool behind.
'Tis but a shade reflected thou dost see,
And if thou turnest 'twill return with thee.

Yet naught could draw him from that lonely
place,
No thought of food, or sleep at eventide.
Ever he gazed upon the mirrored face
And with the vision ne'er was satisfied.
Until at last he rose, and to the trees
Bewailed his mournful fate in words like these :

'Ye woods, where lovers ever shelter find,
Have you a grief than mine more cruel known,
Or found a heart so vexed by fate unkind
In all the long years that you here have
grown ?
I see—yet what I see may not obtain.
I love—and yet deluded love in vain.

And still—O grief !—we are not parted now
By roads or hills or walls with close shut gates.
If but the water passage would allow
He too expectant on my coming waits.
For when I stretched my lips towards the spring
He strove to mine his upturned face to bring.

So slight the barrier that between us lay
I almost might have touched his rosy cheek.
Come, my beloved, come to me, I pray :
Fly not from me when I your presence seek.
You need not shun me. I am young and fair
And nymphs have begged me oft their couch to share.

Your kindly looks have hope within me bred.
I stretch my arms ; and you stretch yours to mine.
I weep ; you seem at once to droop your head.
I smile ; your eyes with laughter gayly shine.
And in the movements of your lips I guess
An answer to the words that I address.

Ah ! now I know the truth. I, I am he !
It is my very self that I desire,
And my own image in the fountain see.
I lit the flame that burns me with its fire ;
What can I do ? Be lover now or loved ?
Beggared by my own wealth, yet helpless proved.

O would that from myself I might escape—
Strange, strange petition!—Would he were not here,
That love of mine, and had another shape
From that which to my eyes now seems so dear.
Full soon, methinks, from this sore load of grief
My very agony will bring relief.

For I must die: and then my pain will end.
Only I wish that he might longer live.
Two deaths in this one blow will Fortune send
And to two loving hearts destruction give.
Alas, alas! I cannot bear my doom:
My life is done ere it had reached its bloom.'

Metam., III, 407-473.

PYRAMUS AND THISBE

In the 'Pyramus and Thisbe' *Ovid leaves for the moment the romantic legends of gods and heroes, and gives us a simple and instructive tale, explaining the origin of the mulberry's red juice. Of the two hundred and fifty stories in the* Metamorphoses *this is the only one that does not appear elsewhere in classical literature, although it was sufficiently familiar to Bottom and his companions. Probably Ovid borrowed it from one of those collections of Eastern tales that afterwards appear in literature as* The Arabian Nights.

In all the East there lived no comelier pair
Than Pyramus and Thisbe, none more fair
In the great city with its walls of clay
Kiln-burnt, where once Semiramis held sway.
Neighbours they dwelt, their houses side by side,
By nearness first and friendship's ties allied
Till years brought love. In truth they would have made
A happy couple; but their sires forbade.

And even then, despite their parents' ire,
Their hearts still burned alike with mutual fire,
Though none would help and looks and gestures sad
Were all the food their hidden passion had.

At last they found a chink which none had seen
Within their party-wall—love made them keen
Of vision and to them the hole revealed
Which all the bygone years had lain concealed—
A trusty channel for their speech, where through
Soft words of love might pass and whispers low.
Oft when they stood, thus parted yet so near,
And caught each other's breath with eager ear;
'O cruel, cruel wall'—they both would sigh,
'Why dost thou still our union deny?
One fond embrace, how small a thing were this!
Seems it too much? Then grant at least one kiss;
And earn our further thanks; for well we wot,
That 'tis through thee our words have passage got.'

So would they talk, and ere ' Good night ' they said,
A kiss unfelt upon the wall they laid.

Aurora now had put the stars to flight
And on the herbage dried the hoar-frost white,
When to their chink they came, still grieving sore
And vowed that they could bear their pain no more.
' This night,' they whispered, ' while our guardians sleep
And all is still, we from the house will creep
Into the open fields about the town
Hard by the mount where Ninus' tomb is shown,
And rest in shadow 'neath the mulberry tall
Which stands, with snow-white fruit a mark for all,
Beside the running spring.' Such was their plan :
And all too slow that day the long hours ran,
Until at last the sun in Ocean's bed
Sank, and from ocean dark night raised her head.

Then Thisbe oped the door and with veiled face
Went all unnoticed to their trysting-place,
And by the tomb sat down beneath the tree,
Made bold by love. But in the darkness, see
A lioness, her jaws adrip with blood,
Who to the spring side came and drinking stood.
The maiden looked, and to the cavern sped
Leaving her cloak behind her as she fled.
The beast, with thirst allayed, the garment found,
Its owner safe, and dragged it o'er the ground
With bloody jaws and rent it all around.

The youth drew near; and at that grievous sight,
The cloak besmeared with blood, cried loud,
"This night
Shall bring two lovers to their death, for she
Deserved to live: she died for love of me.
Mine is the fault: why did I bid her come
To face these dangers and to leave her home
While I was absent? Come, ye lions, rend
My guilty limbs as well, and make an end:
Or else this sword upon me death shall send."

So did he speak, and took the mangled gown
To where the shadow of the tree was thrown.
He kissed the stuff, and cried as his tears fell—
"You shall be reddened by my blood as well;"
Then at the word drew forth his trusty blade,
And with one thrust an end of living made.
His blood gushed out like water from the main,
When some lead pipe has broken with the strain
And lets the captive stream to heaven rise,
Escaping from the hissing orifice.
The tree ensanguined with the crimson dye
Was reddened to its roots; and that is why
Still runs with blood the juice of mulberry.

Metam., IV, 55-127.

SALMACIS AND HERMAPHRODITUS

Hermaphroditus, son of Hermes and Aphrodite, possessed his father's youthful grace, his mother's invincible charm. The naiad Salmacis, living in wanton idleness, fell enamoured of him, and in answer to her prayer was united with him in one body, becoming the sexless bi-sexed creature that we call hermaphrodite. From this story come many of the more voluptuous passages in Shakespeare's 'Venus and Adonis,' *although the language of the Roman poet is far less unbridled than that of the Elizabethan.*

No spear she ever holds, no painted quiver ;
Never her time in hunting will she pass ;
She bathes her comely limbs within her river
And has its water for a looking glass ;
With boxwood comb she combs her flowing tresses
And wrapped in lucent robe the herbage presses.

Often she gathers flowers ; and on that day
With picking posies she beguiled her leisure,
When she beheld the boy, and lo, straightway
Resolved to take her fill of amorous pleasure.
But first she pranked her dress and smoothed her face,
And called to help her all her beauty's grace.

Then thus did she begin : " A god in sooth,
And if a god, then Cupid here I see !
Happy thy mother and thy sister both,
Happy the nurse who gave her breast to thee !
But happier far than all thy promised bride
Whom thou shalt deign to welcome to thy side.

If such there be, let mine be stolen joy ;
If not, let us in wedlock be united."
So spoke the naiad ; but the timid boy
Blushed rosy red, his innocence despited—
For never yet of wedlock had he dreamed—
And as he blushed to her more lovely seemed.

As ofttimes in a sunny orchard close
Half hid by leaves ripe apples we espy ;
As painted ivories their whiteness lose ;
As the moon reddens in the evening sky
When the loud cymbals clash to bring her aid ;
So were the lad's soft cheeks like roses made.

" Give me at least," she cried, " a brother's kiss "—
And sought her arms around his neck to throw.
" Have done," said he, " I love not ways like this ;
Have done, or I will leave this place and you."
The nymph affrighted feigned to go away,
And in a neighbouring thicket hidden lay.

The boy imagined that he was alone,
And dipped his feet within the lapping wave ;
And stripping naked, now that she was gone,
Prepared in the cool stream his limbs to lave.
Spellbound the maid upon his beauty looked
With eyes ablaze, and scarce concealment brooked.

Then with clapped hands he plunged into the pool
And with alternate strokes began to swim.
An ivory statue set in crystal cool,
A lily seems he on the river's brim.
'Victory!' the naiad cries, and diving down
All naked takes the intruder for her own.

In vain he strives: she holds him closely pressed,
Stealing a kiss meanwhile, with arms thrown round him.
Fondly she touches his unwilling breast
And will not let him go now she has found him.
E'en as a serpent in an eagle's hold
Seeks with soft coils her captor to enfold,

And borne aloft entwines his beating wings
And wraps herself around his claws and head;
Or e'en as ivy to a tree trunk clings
Or as a polyp on the ocean's bed
On every side puts greedy suckers out
And holds his prisoner compassed all about.

But yet the stubborn boy denies her will
Nor can she gain the joy wherefor she craves,
Until at last close fastened to him still
She draws him down beneath the placid waves
And cries : ' Strive as you may, you shall not go.
Join him to me, ye gods, and keep us so.'

Her wish was granted. Even as she prayed
A change came over them, by heaven's might,
Of their two forms a single shape was made
Which did their bodies twain in one unite,
No longer two, a man and woman, deemed ;
Of either sex or neither now they seemed.

Metam., IV, 308-379.

PERSEUS AND ANDROMEDA

Andromeda, daughter of the great African chief Kepf—in Greek, Cepheus—as a punishment for her mother's boasting, was taken, by order of the god Ju-Jah Ammon, to the sea-shore, chained to a rock, and left to be devoured by a sea monster. There she was seen by Perseus, as he came flying back to Europe from the ends of the earth with the head of Medusa, and by him was rescued and married. The offspring of their union were the ancestors of the Persian nation; and this tale was considered by the ingenious Greeks to account for their swarthy complexions. Andromeda, it should be remembered, in spite of the representations of her legend in modern art, was an Ethiopian and coal-black.

By god's decree Andromeda must pay
For her proud mother's boasting: on rough stone
Fastened by chains a captive she must stay,
To a sea monster left as prize alone.
O cruel fate! O unjust punishment
By ruthless Ammon on the daughter sent!

So fair she seemed that Perseus swiftly flying
Thought her a statue carved in marble rare,
Until he saw her in her anguish crying,
While the soft wind disported with her hair.
Then was his heart so thrilled with sudden love
That almost he forgot his wings to move.

Swift he came down; and, standing by the maiden,
He cried, enraptured by the beauteous sight:
"Not with such chains as these should you be laden,
But with those bonds that lovers' hearts unite.
Oh, tell me, pray, your name and your estate,
And why a prisoner by this rock you wait!"

At first she made no answer to her lover,
For she had ne'er been used with men to speak;
And if her hands had not been bound above her
She would have sought to hide her blushing cheek.
Only her eyes were free; and these her fears
Veiled in a mist of swiftly-rising tears.

But still he urged her tell him of her sorrow;
And lest he should imagine she concealed
A crime, from shame some courage she did borrow,
And all her mother's pride to him revealed.
And as she spoke her tale was proven true;
For with a roar the monster swam in view.

Loud wept the virgin when from out the wave
She saw that grisly head and shoulders rise;
And now her parents, helpless both to save,
Fill the wide heaven with their woeful cries.
For cries and tears alone were in their power,
Nor could they help their child in that fell hour.

Then spake the stranger: "Time will be enow
For weeping later; 'tis but little space
To aid her that the fates this hour allow.
Perseus am I; and if you seek my race,
My mother was that prisoner pent in vain
Whom the god filled with seed of golden rain.

The snaky Gorgon's death attests my fame,
And I have dared on wings the air to ride,
And by my deeds of valour I might claim
Your daughter, if I asked her, for my bride.
But now, with heaven's favour, I will crown
These with her life, and have her for my own."

(*Then follows the fight between Perseus and the monster, the hero's triumph, and the creature's death* (704-734).)

The shores resound with cheers and shouts of glee
And the high hills whereon the great gods dwell,
While father Cepheus and Cassiopë
Salute the hero who has fought so well,
And cry :—' A son indeed to us has come,
The prop and saviour of our royal home.'

The maiden too unfettered shows her face,
Prize of the feat whereof she was the cause,

And Perseus longing for his bride's embrace
To lave his war-worn hands fresh water draws;
And that the Gorgon's head no stones may bruise
On the hard sand green leaves and seaweed strews.

Then with fresh turf he builds him altars three;
The left for Mercury, the next for Jove,
And on the right, Minerva, one for thee,
Whereon he slays a cow: the king above
Receives an ox, and last he dyes the sod
With bullock's blood to please the wingèd god.

And now the maid as guerdon he can take;
Nor wishes he for greater gift withal.
Hymen and Love the marriage torches shake
And fragrant incense fills the flower-decked hall:
While merry songs, the signs of men's delight,
To lyre and flute re-echo through the night.

Metam., IV, 671-764.

ARETHUSA AND THE RIVER-GOD

The tale of Arethusa and Alpheüs is a very curious example of local legend passing into mythology. In the island of Ortygia, near Syracuse, there was a fountain Arethusa, "the gusher"; in the Peloponnese on the west coast there was a river Alpheüs. A persistent belief existed that between fountain and river there was an undersea connection, and that any object thrown into Alpheüs would appear again in Arethusa. Hence the fable that in mortal shape the river-god loved the fountain nymph; that to escape from him she fled across the sea to Sicily, and that following her there he mingles his waters with hers in her new home.

"I was a nymph," fair Arethusa said,
"And in Achaea dwelt, a stalwart maid;
To hunt and fix the nets my chiefest care,
Heedless of beauty though they called me fair.
My face to me gave nothing but annoy
And that soft talk which other girls enjoy—

'O what firm limbs, O what a comely frame'—
Brought to my cheeks a blush of rustic shame.
I took no pleasure in such things as these
And thought it was a sin to try and please.

Well I remember yet that summer noon
When, as I wandered through the woods alone,
I sudden came upon a murmuring brook,
So crystal clear that in it you could look
And count each pebble in the depths below,
So placid that it scarcely seemed to flow,
Its sloping banks pleached by the pleasant shade
That silvery willows and green poplars made.

My feet at first, and then my knees, I dipped
In the cool wave, and then my tunic slipped
From off my limbs, and hung it on a tree,
And plunged into the stream as nature free.
I tossed my arms and on the water beat,
Gliding and turning in my safe retreat,
When lo, as deep I sank in water cool,
I heard a sound mysterious in the pool.

I leapt to land, while hoarse Alpheüs cried,
'Go not so soon, O do not leave my tide.
Stay with me, Arethusa; with me stay.'
Fierce came his voice; I made no more delay,
But naked fled, nor had I time to find
My garments on the bank. He pressed behind
On fire with love, nor heeded my distress
If he could take me in my nakedness.
As doves fly trembling when the hawk they view,
So hastened I, and so did he pursue.

Through pathless wastes mid rocks I fled
And over plains and tree-clad mountains sped,
Past Psophis, Elis, and Cyllene's hill,
And Maenala, and Erymanthus chill,
And where Orchomenos lies low in shade;
His match in running, though I was a maid,
But scarce in strength: with ease he could sustain
The course that I must labour to maintain.

The sun shone bright behind me, and it seemed
His shadow ran in front ; or so I deemed
It in my dread ; a surer cause of fear
His trampling feet and breath as he drew near.
At last forspent I could no more endure
And to Diana cried, my helper sure :—
'Save me, thy nymph, whom oft thou didst allow
To bear thy shafts, thy quiver, and thy bow.'

The goddess heard and from the heavenly height
Cast down a cloud, and hid me from his sight,
So that at fault he quested for his prey
Nor could behold where wrapped in mist I lay,
And ' Arethusa, Arethusa ' cried,
Circling about the place where I did hide.
Ah, how I trembled then ! e'en as poor sheep
Tremble when wolves their ravening vigil keep
Or as a hare that seeks 'neath briars to rest
Nor dares to move, by questing hounds hard
pressed :
For still he lingered and still watched the place
From whence he saw my feet had left no trace.

Down all my limbs an icy moisture ran,
And wheresoe'er I stepped a pool began,
Made with the drops that from my body fell,
And soon, more swiftly than this tale I tell,
I changed to water ; and the god was fain
To mingle with my waves, a stream again.
But lo ! once more Diana came to aid,
And cleft the earth, and for me passage made
To her Ortygia, land I love so well,
And there, returned to light, in this dear fount
I dwell."

Metam., V, 577-641.

TEREUS AND PHILOMELA

The story of Tereus, Procne and Philomela, although extremely repulsive in many of its details, was a great favourite at Athens, where it was held up to girls as a warning against any relations with foreign men. Tereus of Thrace, after marrying Procne of Athens, fell enamoured of her sister Philomela, and, while bringing the girl to visit his wife, took her by force, cut out her tongue to prevent her betraying him, shut her up in a lonely house and pretended that she was dead. Philomela, however, contrived to tell the story of the crime on a piece of woven tapestry which she had conveyed to her sister, and Procne in revenge killed her only child, the boy Itys, and served him to his father as food. At the end all four characters in this woeful drama were changed into birds, Tereus becoming a hoopoe, Itys a sandpiper, Procne a swallow, and Philomela a nightingale.

Five years had passed since Procne first was wed
When to her lord she spake :—" If any grace
Of love has passed between us in this bed
Grant me a boon, to see my sister's face.
Go, ask my father that to us she come
A little while ; or let me else go home."

Then Tereus launched his ship, and, sail and oar
Both aiding, sped upon his watery road,
And reached Piraeus and the Attic shore,
And entered into Pandion's abode.
He clasped the old king's hand, and spake him well
And then began why he had come to tell.

" Your daughter longs her sister, sire, to see,"
He said ; " and soon she will be safe restored,
If you allow her now to come with me :
That we will promise." As he said the word
Fair Philomel appeared, rich in her dress,
But richer still in native loveliness.

So look the nymphs who roam beneath the trees
Through the green forest or the sprites who dwell,
Deep in the water, gliding where they please,
Whereof fond poets in their verses tell:
Or so would look, if they were e'er arrayed
In splendour as was then the Attic maid.

The sight at once set Tereus' heart aflame.
E'en as ripe corn or leaves or hay in fire
Are swift consumed away, so on him came
A burning gust of sudden fierce desire.
Her beauty and his mood swift passion move
For men in Thrace are ever prone to love.

Forthwith he plans her handmaid's help to win
And to corrupt her trusty nurse with gold
And then by gifts to tempt herself to sin
Yielding his kingdom that fair maid to hold:
Or else by force to carry her away
And at the price of war cling to his prey.

Fast prisoned is he now in passion's chain
And there is nothing that he would not dare.
His breast the fires of love can scarce contain
To break through all delays his only care.
So taking as a cloak his wife's behest
With eager lips he urges her request.

Love makes him eloquent ; but when he pleads
Most hotly, it is still in Procne's name
He weeps, pretending that her words he heeds ;
And from his guilt acquires a fairer fame.
Alas for mortal folly ! He doth plan
A crime most foul, yet seems an honest man.

Young Philomela too to go is fain.
She takes her father's neck within her arm
And whispers :—' Let me see my dear again '—
Hoping for joy whence naught shall come but harm ;
And while she knows not yet of his intent
Seeks to beguile him with soft blandishment.

Upon her Tereus looks with burning eyes,
And dreams already of unlawful bliss
When he shall have her body as his prize;
While as he sees her fondle him and kiss
He wishes now that he her father were;
Nor if her father, would the virgin spare.

He finds fresh food and fuel for his lust
In each embrace she on the king bestows;
Until at last o'ercome Pandion must
Yield to the pair, and their request allows.
The hapless maid rejoices to believe
That both have won, who both so soon shall grieve.

Now the sun's task was done: his chariot falls
Down through the West, the while a feast is made
And wine flows free within the royal halls,
Until at last in slumber all are laid:
All save the Thracian; never can he rest,
So fierce the throb of longing in his breast.

He sees again the maiden's blushing face
And the quick movement of her slender fingers.
He dreams he holds her in a close embrace
And on her secret charms in fancy lingers.
All through the night his thoughts keep him awake
And from his own desires new fervour take.

So morning came, and on his painted barque
Fair Philomela stepped to cross the sea,
Swift fell the oars churning the water dark
Until the shore lay dim upon their lee.
'Hurrah,' cried Tereus; 'we have left the land:
I have my wish: she's here beneath my hand.'

Metam., VI, 438-531.

CEPHALUS AND PROCRIS

There is material for at least two modern novels in the story of Cephalus and Procris, which contains much more of psychological interest, much more of the finer shades of amorous feeling than is usual in Greek mythology. The hero's wonderful hound Lailaps and his magic javelin, which always hit its mark and then returned, are extraneous ornaments: the real basis of the story is purely human, the mutual and ungrounded suspicions of a husband and a wife. The episode of the wife's jealousy of a supposed 'Aura', aroused by foolish gossip, is told by Ovid both in the Ars Amoris *and in the* Metamorphoses. *Equally romantic is the story of the husband's foolish doubting, as told here by himself.*

Two months it was since Procris was my bride
  When on a morn, as by Hymettus' crest
I spread my nets, Aurora me espied,
  Goddess of dawn in saffron vesture dressed.

She burned with sudden passion, woe the day !
And all unwilling carried me away.

Forgive me, queen ; but I the truth must tell.
As sure as thou with rosy face dost shine
In that dim land where night and morning dwell,
Quaffing the nectar's juice with lips divine,
So sure my love for Procris stayed : to her
My every word, my thoughts still constant were.

Of wedlock would I speak, and love's young joy,
And the warm couch by me so soon forsaken,
Until the goddess cried in sad annoy :—
" Ingrate, be gone : you'll wish you ne'er had taken
Your Procris for your wife in days to come ;
Get to her now." And so she sent me home.

But as I went I pondered on her warning
And feared perchance that Procris too had been
Unfaithful to our troth since that fell morning
When I was borne away by heaven's queen.

Her beauty and her youth set me afraid,
Though well I knew she was a modest maid.

I had been absent from her for a season,
  And she from whom I came was light of love.
Fond hearts like mine fear all without a reason
  And I resolved her faithfulness to prove.
I changed my visage, by Aurora's power,
And as a stranger sought our marriage bower.

But when to Athens' sacred town I came
  And saw my home before me safe restored,
Unharmed I found it, chaste and free of blame,
  Yet sad and anxious for its absent lord.
And many a trick and turn must I essay
Before unto my wife I found my way.

Scarce could I bear so basely to deceive her
  When I beheld her fair yet sorrowing face :
I longed without more trial to believe her
  And take her to my arms in fond embrace.
Sad were her looks ; but sadness beauty gave
Such as no other woman e'er shall have.

Fondly she seemed to yearn for the departed,
Who long had left her to her loneliness :
Yet still my doubts prevailed, and soon I started
With flattering words a lover's suit to press.
But to my pleas she only made reply :—
" One lord I serve and his alone am I."

Had I been sane such words had been enow ;
But still to slay my happiness I tried.
I promised on her fortunes to bestow,
And, when she wavered, in base triumph cried :—
" It is no lover, wanton, that you see ;
Your husband knows now your adultery."

No word she spake, but silent in her shame
Fled from her treacherous spouse and from his home,
And hating all men to Diana came
And with her on the mountain side did roam ;
While I abandoned felt within me burn
Love's fiercest fire and longed for her return.

I sent and craved her pardon and did own
  My cruel sin, and said to gifts so great
I too had yielded and I was alone,
  Until at last she pitied my sad state,
Her shame avenged. And so I won my wife
Again and lived for years a happy life.

Metam., VII, 700-752.

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

Many of the Jewish stories have their analogies in Greek mythology, and the legend of Philemon and Baucis offers some curious resemblances to the tale of Lot and his wife. Jove and Mercury, visiting the earth, are refused shelter by all the country-side until they come to the cottage where old Philemon and Baucis live in contented poverty. They freely offer the strangers all they possess, and in return are saved from the destruction by flood which Jove sends upon their wicked

neighbours. Their final happy transformation into trees concludes the history and is here told.

One goose they had, guard of their poor domain ;
Whom for their guests' delight they would have slain.
But he was strong of wing, and they were old
And scarce had strength the fluttering bird to hold,
Until at last he seemed for aid to flee
To Jove himself and sheltered by his knee.
'Slay not this bird,'—the king of heaven cried,
'I am great Jove and on this country-side
'Must vengeance take. But you shall feel no ill :
'Leave this your house and come to yonder hill.'
The aged pair obeyed the god's command,
And taking up their staves with trembling hand
Climbed the long slope. Soon on the crest they stood,
And gazing back beheld a mighty flood

That swept tumultous through the fertile plains
So that of all the houses now remains
Only their humble roof. They looked in awe,
Weeping their neighbours' fate; when lo they saw
The cot, which for themselves had been too small,
Change shape and grow into a temple tall.
Pillars of stone replace its wooden beams,
The thatch turns yellow and now golden seems,
The doors are rich embossed, and all around
Fair slabs of marble hide the naked ground.
Then said great Jove:—'Goodman and thou goodwife,
Ask what you will for this your mortal life;
It shall be yours.' Philemon took aside
Old Baucis for a while and thus replied:—
'Let us both serve yon temple, she and I;
'And since we have ever lived in harmony
'Grant at one hour that death to both may come
'And that I never see my dear wife's tomb,

'Nor that it be her lot to build me mine.'
Their prayer was answered, and within the shrine
They lived at peace together, and foredone
By years and weakness still in love were one.
At last one evening standing by the door,
As they recalled the bygone days of yore,
Each saw the other take a leafy dress
And felt a growth of bark about them press.
'Farewell, dear mate,' they cried, 'Dear mate, farewell:'
And straightway yielded to the magic spell.
Such was their end. The peasants of that land
Show even now two trees that neighbours stand
With double trunk, and make their humble prayer
To good Philemon and good Baucis there.

Metam., VIII, 684-721.

THE PROFITABLE CHILD

The story of Erysichthon and his daughter, although it is linked up with the ancient saga and supplied with divine personages, is in its true nature a pure fantasy and might appear in a collection of fairy tales. The wicked Erysichthon sins against the goddess Ceres by cutting down a sacred oak-tree, and in revenge she summons the demon Hunger from the wastes of Scythia and sends her, a kind of vampire succube, to him in his sleep. As the result he is tormented with an insatiable desire for food, to satisfy which he sells all his ancestral possessions, and at last, as is here related, his daughter. Finally he is reduced to eating his own flesh and dies in agony.

But still his rage for eating never ceased
And hunger fierce devoured him unappeased.
To it he gave his house, his lands, his gold :
Only his child remained—and her he sold.

But she rebelled and to the god of sea :—
' Save me,' she cried, ' for my virginity
Thou once didst take, nor let me be a slave
Whom as thy lover thou hast deigned to have.
Her prayer was answered. As upon the shore
She stood, a change came o'er her : who before
Had been a girl now as a fisher stood
With line and baited angle seeking food.
Her master looked, and to the fisher spake :—
' You who with rod and hook your dinner take,
So may the sea be calm and trustful fish
Come to the bait according to your wish
And never feel the hook until they're laid
Safe at your feet ; tell me where is the maid
Who stood just now with locks dishevelled here ;
For see, her footprints plainly still appear ? '
The girl perceived the power of Neptune's gift
And said :—' Excuse me, sir ; I may not lift
My eyes from off this pool, nor have I seen
Aught but these waves since I've a-fishing been.
So may kind Neptune help me in my art
As it is true that no one in this part

Of the shore has stood for quite a long time
back,
No man and certainly no maid, alack.'

The buyer in the fisher's words believed
And left her, by the story quite deceived.
And then her former shape to her returned
And for her father many a fee she earned.
For when he saw that she could change her
look
From purchasers a cheating price he took.
Now as a mare he sold her to them, now
She was a bird, a fallow-deer, a cow.
And so for many weeks she did supply
Victuals wherewith his greed to satisfy.

Metam., VIII, 843-874.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF DRYOPË

The story of Dryopë is a striking example of the sanctity which Greek religion attached to trees and flowers, and of the retribution which might fall upon any one who even unwittingly did them damage. All trees and shrubs were potentially the abode of a nymph—or rather they were the nymph herself in another guise—and to injure them was to injure the divinity. The tale is told by Iolë, Dryopë's half-sister, to Alcmena, mother of Heracles.

THERE is a lake, with myrtle bushes crowned,
Whose shores soft sloping make a beach around.
Thither my sister came, nor dreamed of harm,
Holding her infant child upon her arm,
A nursling at the breast; for she had mind
Flowers as a garland for the nymphs to find.
Beside the pool a water lotus grew,
Its blooms, not fruited yet, of every hue

That Tyrian vats afford : her babe to please
My sister stooped and plucked him some of these.
I in my turn bent down to pluck as well
When, as I looked, from those bright blossoms fell
Red drops of blood and through the bush hard by
A shudder ran, as though of agony.
For you must know within that bush of old
Fair Lotis refuge took—the tale is told
E'en now by rustic hinds—what time she fled
Priapus : there her human limbs she shed ;
But in the foliage still lives on the same
And still is lotus called by her own name.

But this my sister knew not : so dismayed
To the kind nymphs she for forgiveness prayed
And would have left the place : but to the ground
Her feet were rooted by strange fetters bound.
To tear herself away in vain she strove ;
Naught of her body, save her arms, would move.

Her lower limbs by bark are held embraced,
Which slowly climbing rises to her waist,
And when in grief she tries to rend her hair
She finds no locks but only foliage there.
Her babe Amphissos feels his mother's breast
Grow cold and hard, and when to her he pressed
No longer could he draw his milky food.
I saw it all : yet helpless there I stood,
And while I clasped the tree trunk to my side
I longed within that self same bark to hide.

But lo, her husband and her hapless sire
Come, making search, and eagerly inquire
Where Dryopë may be. Naught can I say,
But point towards the lotus. They straightway
Kiss the warm wood, and falling prostrate down
Embrace the roots of her who was their own.
For of my sister naught was now left free
Save her dear face : the rest of her was tree.
Yet from her leaves the tears fell fast like rain
And while her lips as yet unclosed remain

She poured forth these complaints into the air :—
'Believe me now : by all the gods I swear,
I have not merited this dreadful thing :
Guiltless has been my life : this suffering
Is not crime's punishment. Nay, if I lie
May my green foliage wither, sear and dry,
And I by axes keen in sunder hewn
Be logs upon a fire for burning strewn.
Now take my infant from the boughs that were
His mother's arms, and let a nurse have care
To give him milk, and let him come and play
Beneath my spreading leaves, and sadly say,
When he has learned to talk :—"Within this tree
My mother lives though she is hid from me."
But bid him fear the waters of the lake
Nor ever from these boughs their blossoms break,
But rather think that every coppice hides
A goddess who within its depths abides.

Good-bye, dear husband : if you love your wife,
Save these my branches from the ruthless knife
Nor to my foliage let stray goats come nigh ;
Good-bye, dear father ; sister dear, good-bye !
Alas, no longer to you can I bend ;
You must stretch up and me assistance lend.
Give me my babe to kiss, while yet I may
Feel his dear lips. Ah, no more can I say.
Around my neck a choking grasp I feel,
The coils of bark that now above me steal,
And rob me of my sight with their close bands.
Ah me, I shall not need your loving hands
To close my eyes in death, ah me, ah me ! '
Therewith she ceased to speak, and ceased to be.

Metam., IX, 334-392.

IPHIS AND IANTHE

Before the birth of Iphis the husband of Telethusa declared that he would not rear a girl child. Pretence accordingly was made that Iphis was a boy. The name, like our Leslie, is of common gender, and on reaching puberty a marriage was arranged with Ianthe, a neighbour's daughter. Telethusa in despair prayed to Isis to change her child's sex, and Iphis by the grace of heaven became in reality a man.

Now thirteen years had passed, and for his son
The father sought a wife in union,
And chose Ianthe, of all maids in Crete
The fairest, for his Iphis bride most meet.
Equal in age, in beauty equal, they
Had shared alike their childhood's tasks and play
And to their virgin hearts alike there came
The throb of love and love's consuming flame.
But not alike their hopes of future joy,
Nor the fond fears that all their thoughts employ :

Ianthe dreams of marriage when that she,
Whom still she thinks a man, her man shall be :
But Iphis knows that love for her is vain,
For never shall it full fruition gain ;
Yet by the knowledge feels a fiercer fire,
Maiden for maiden burning with desire.

" Oh, what will be the end ! "—she weeping cries,
" Have you no ruth, ye dwellers in the skies,
To send upon me this unnatural grief
So monstrous that it passes men's belief !
I must be strong and banish from my heart
This hopeless love where reason has no part.
Hope begets love and hope keeps love alive
And my own sex of hope must me deprive.
My wishes, true, are granted : God has given
All that I prayed to gain from kindly heaven ;
But nature still forbids, and when I go
To play the husband's part she will say no.
Ianthe will be mine—O fate accurst—
And yet not mine ; mid water I shall thirst.

For how can Hymen bless this manless rite
Where bride meets bride upon the wedding night ?"

So would she cry aloud and cry in vain,
The while Ianthe with an equal pain
Desired the nuptial hour when they should meet
And she her lover as a husband greet.
But Telethusa, fearing what she sought,
Reasons of sickness and sad omens brought
Why they should stay unwed, and all things tried
To keep her Iphis from Ianthe's side.
Yet soon the day drew nigh : no more delay
Can Telethusa win the time to stay
When Iphis must be wed ; so with their hair
Loosed from the fillets thus she made her prayer :
" Help us, dear Isis, heal our sore distress,
As erst thou didst with saving counsel bless ;
For that my daughter lives the light to see
And I unpunished go is thanks to thee."

Tears followed with her words. At once bright
gleams
Shoot from the goddess' horns, her altar seems
To move in presage of a change to come,
And Telethusa went rejoicing home.
For as she left the temple, at her side
Her Iphis walked—but with a longer stride
Than erst she used, and with a darker hue
Upon her cheeks than once her mirror knew.
Her looks less timid seemed, her hair unbound
Less flowing, and in all her limbs was found
More than a woman's strength : in very truth
She who had been a girl was now a youth !
The morning came ; great Juno and her child,
Dan Hymenaeus, with queen Venus smiled
Upon the pair ; and Iphis to his bed,
A stalwart husband, fair Ianthe led.

Metam., IX, 718-797.

PYGMALION AND THE IMAGE

The story of Pygmalion, like that of Pyramus, is probably eastern in origin and is connected with the island of Cyprus, one of the stepping-stones in the passage of Aphrodite worship from Asia to Europe. From Pygmalion and his image descend Paphos, her son Cinyras, his daughter Myrrha, and her son Adonis.

For long Pygmalion lived in single state
Holding the race of womankind in hate,
Until at last by idle fancy led,
An image for himself he fashioned.
Ivory he takes, and thence with happy art
Carves forth a figure, perfect in each part,
More fair than woman ; and his skill to prove
With the white statue falls himself in love.
Art conceals art ; she seems a living maid,
Alert and ready, were she not afraid
To vex her maker, who by love inspired
Is for the sculptured shape with passion fired.

Often he lifts his hands the work to try
If it be breathing flesh or ivory ;
Nor will confess its lips still cold remain
To all his kisses, nor can kiss again.
He speaks soft words, and clasps it to his arm,
Fearing the while lest he should do it harm,
And fondles every limb with loving embrace warm.

Soon he brings presents, such as girls delight ;
Pebbles, and rounded shells, and nosegays bright,
A bird, a lily, or a painted ball,
Or amber tears that from the poplars fall.
Draped in soft robes, with rings upon its hands
And necklets round its neck, the statue stands.
With chains and pearls adorned it seems most fair,
But yet more comely when body bare
It lies upon a couch all purple spread,
And on soft pillows rests its shapely head,
Called by Pygmalion bride and consort of his bed.

Now Venus' feast had come ; and to her shrine
All Cyprus thronged. The sacrificial kine
With gilded horns before the altar fell,
Where incense breathed on high its magic spell,
And as he threw his offering on the fire
Pygmalion voiced his inmost heart's desire—
" If ye, O gods, can give all things, I pray,
" Give me as wife "—he did not dare to say
" My ivory maid," he only whispered low,
" One like my ivory maid on me bestow."
But golden Venus—for herself was there—
Knew what he meant, and smiling at his prayer
As omen of her favour made the flame
Leap thrice in air. Pygmalion homeward came
And sought the imaged shape in semblance yet
the same.

But when he bent and kissed her—lo ! her breast
Seems warm beneath the fingers that caressed
Its ivory smoothness, and his touch obeys
Like wax that softens in the sun's hot rays

Or useful grows by use beneath your hand
And takes whatever shape you may command.
Pygmalion thrilled with joy and doubt and fear,
Testing his hopes upon the image dear.
Yes she was living flesh : her veins pulsed fast
And on real lips his lips were pressed at last.
The maiden felt his kiss, and raised her eyes,
And saw at once her lover and the skies,
While he gives thanks to Venus for his longed for prize.

Metam., X, 245-294.

VENUS AND ADONIS

From the story of Venus and Adonis in Ovid, artfully blended with another of his tales, Shakespeare took the framework of his poem. How lavishly he embroidered on his material may be here seen.

One day as Cupid Venus kissed, his dart
Unwitting grazed her breast. She felt the smart
And pushed her son away ; but lo, the sting
Had deeper gone and soon was festering.
Now for Adon she burns, and cares no more
For high Cythera nor for Paphos shore,
Nor Cnidos, nor the Amathuntian ore.
The sky she leaves and thinks Adonis heaven
And holds him fast nor can from him be riven.
Once she was wont to dally in the shade
And to enhance her beauty by the aid
Of cunning artifice ; but now to please
Her love she roams mid hills and brakes and trees,
Like Dian girt to knee with white legs bare,
And tarrs the hounds and hunts the flying hare,
The stag with branching antlers and the doe,
And all such beasts as fly before the foe.
But ravening wolves and lions with red maws,
And boars and bears armed with their sharpened claws

She shuns, and bids Adonis to beware
If haply for her warnings he have care.
" Be bold against the timid : with the brave
Boldness," she cries, " means danger ; do not crave
A glory which may cost too great a price
And at my risk neglect my fond advice.
Be not too rash, nor hasten to engage
Those beasts that nature arms fierce strife to wage.
Not youth nor beauty nor the charms of love
Avail rough boars' or lions' hearts to move.
Boars in their tusks have all the lightning's fire,
And tawny lions rage with deadly ire.
I fear and hate them both."—The boy asked why ;
And in her turn thus Venus made reply—
" Strange is the legend of that ancient sin,
Yet am I fain the story to begin :
But with the chase I have been weary made ;
See, yonder poplar offers his soft shade,

Come let us rest beneath it."—At the word
Within his arms she sank upon the sward,
And while her head upon his bosom fell
Began with frequent kiss her tale to tell.

(*Then follows the long story of Hippomenes and Atalanta, and how the hero by help of the golden apples given him by Venus conquered the maiden in the foot race and won her as his bride: how he then repaid her with ingratitude and was incited by her to have union with his wife in the temple of Cybele, who revenged this profanation by changing them both into savage lions.*)

So Venus warned her lover, ere she sped
Borne on swan chariot from their grassy bed.
But manly spirits ne'er for warnings care:
His hounds had roused a wild boar from his lair,
Swift following on his trail: the boy in haste
Snatched up his spear and the huge monster chased.
One glancing blow he struck as from the wood
The boar broke out, and then no longer stood

The beast with curved snout shook loose the spear,
Then charged him as he fled in panic fear.
Deep in his groin his tusk he did ensheath
And on the sand Adonis fell in death.

Metam., X, 525-716

THE DEATH OF ORPHEUS

The Thracian minstrel Orpheus appears in the legend under a double aspect. As the devoted husband he goes down to the nether world and by the power of song almost succeeds in rescuing his wife Eurydice from death. But he also appears as an ascetic and a woman-hater, instructing his disciples in the rules of monastic chastity. Hence his painful death at the hands of the Thracian women.

While with such strains he drew the trees along
And beasts and rocks alike obeyed his song,
The frenzied dames of Thrace in skins arrayed
Beheld great Orpheus as he music made,
And cried, their tresses on the light wind borne,—
'Behold the man who holds us all in scorn.'
One cast a spear against the singer's face:
But it refused to wound, and left no trace
Save one faint mark. A stone another threw
But it was checked as through the air it flew
By those soft strains where voice and cither meet
And fell in suppliant fashion at his feet.

But not e'en this their passion could restrain.
Rage and mad fury in their bosoms reign:
Which yet would have been stayed by music's might
Did not their shouts and beating hands unite
With horn and drum and Berecynthian flute
To drown the melody of Orpheus' lute.
So that the stones no longer felt his spell
And 'neath their furious hail the minstrel fell.

Then did the Maenads drive the birds away
Still rapt by Orpheus' voice, and the array
Of snakes and beasts that as an audience stood,
And dared to dye their hands with his pure blood.
Even as sparrows will an owl attack
Caught in the daylight roaming, or a pack
Of hounds within Rome's Amphitheatre grand
About a stag in ravening circle stand.

They hurl against the bard their vine-clad wands
Ne'er made for men to use with murderous hands:
Clods, sticks, and stones fly fast from every side
And chance real weapons to their rage supplied.
For oxen, as it happed, were ploughing near
And at the sight the husbandmen in fear
Gave o'er their toilsome task and fled away
Leaving their tools all scattered as they lay,
Mattocks, and heavy hoes, and pointed rakes
Which for herself each frenzied Maenad takes.

First they set hands upon the patient kine
And tear them piecemeal, heads and limbs and chine,
And then the bard attack and lay him low
Nor to his cries will any mercy show.
Unheeded now the voice, though ne'er before,
Which had entranced the listening woods of yore;
And through those lips, that rocks and beasts obeyed,
His soul, breathed forth, its last faint passage made.

Each bird, each wilding creature wept for thee,
Dear Orpheus, every stone and every tree.
And as behind thee they had used to go
So now the woodlands shed their leaves in woe.
With their own tears the rivers ran in flood
And all the nymphs of water and of wood
With hair dishevelled and with sombre dress
Proclaimed to fount and forest their distress.

The limbs were scattered ; but upon its waves
Thy head and lyre the rushing Hebrus saves ;
And as they floated down the friendly tide—
O wondrous tale !—thy lifeless voice replied
To the lyre's loud lament and all around
The banks re-echoed with the mournful sound.

Metam., XI, 1-53.

PELEUS AND THETIS

The common legend tells how Peleus, son of Aeacus, prince of Thessaly, was the most pious of men, and as a reward for his righteousness received from Zeus the sea goddess Thetis in marriage. Ovid prefers a different version of the story.

There is a bay on the Thessalian shore
That curves in crescent fashion : either head
Runs out to sea, and if there were but more
Of water, ships might shelter free from dread ;
So firm its beach that footsteps leave no trace,
So clear of weed that runners there might race.

Hard by the salt sea grows a myrtle wood
Thick hung with clustering berries red and black,
And mid the foliage a grotto stood
That neither native grace nor art did lack.
There naked Thetis oft was wont to come,
Borne by a dolphin from her watery home.

And there prince Peleus found her on a day,
Escaped in slumber from the noontide heat;
And with soft words of homage did essay
To win her love, and humbly did entreat.
But when his prayers were useless, then at length
He sought to force her to his use by strength.

Swiftly the goddess tried her arts of old,
Or else he would have worked on her his will.
Now she's a bird, but yet he keeps his hold;
Now she's a tree, he clasps the tree trunk still;
Now as a spotted leopard she doth show;
And Peleus frighted lets the leopard go.

But on the morn he prayed the gods of sea
With wine outpoured, and eke with slaughtered sheep,
And with the smoke of incense made his plea,
So that old Proteus rose from out the deep
And said : " O Peleus, thou shalt win thy bride
And take her as a consort to thy side.

When 'neath the rocky cave she lies in thrall
To slumber, bind her fast in clinging bands ;
And though a hundred shapes to aid she call
Heed not her guile, but still with stubborn hands
Hold her, until her primal form she wear."
So Proteus spake and plunged beneath the mere.

The sun was sinking low and held the main
Under his sloping chariot in the west,
When the fair Nereid sought the grot again
And laid her down where she was wont to rest.
Bold Peleus forward leapt, and flung his arms
In close embrace about her virgin charms.

New shapes she takes, but now he holds her fast
With hands tight pinioned and her limbs wide thrown;
Until by force subdued she sobs at last;
"'Tis heaven's will: have Thetis for your own."
The prince triumphant clasps her as she lies
And gets Achilles on his yielding prize.

Metam., XI, 229-265.

CEYX DROWNED AT SEA

The tale of King Ceyx and his faithful wife Alcyone is one of the most pathetic in the Metamorphoses, *and the episode of the tempest is told with all Ovid's usual skill. In the sequel Alcyone finds her husband's corpse upon the shore, and the gods in pity change them both into sea birds.*

Skill fails and courage yields: each wave beneath
Seems now to bring the sure approach of death.
Some weep aloud, some sit in silent grief,
Some call upon the gods to send relief,
And with their hands uplifted to the sky
Beg for the burial that the waves deny.
Some think of fathers, and of kinsmen some,
Others of children, others of their home
Whereto, alas, they never, nevermore shall come.

But Ceyx thinks of his Alcyone;
Upon his lips there is no one but she.
He longs for her alone, and yet to-day
His heart is glad that she is far away.
How would he love to see his native shore
And turn his eyes towards his home once more!

But where he is he knows not; with such
might
The billows swell, and heaven is veiled from
sight
By murky clouds more dark than gloom of
blackest night.

The furious tempest breaks the swaying mast,
The rudder tears away; and now at last
One overwhelming wave, as heaven high,
Above all others wins the victory.
Onward it sweeps, by its own fury borne,
Like some huge mountain from its foothills
torn,
Athos or Pindus, till too monstrous grown
It crashes on the ship, which reeling down
Sinks to the sands below, and leaves its men to
drown.

Most with their vessel perish in the deep
And ne'er returned to light entombment keep

In ocean's darkness ; those who still survive
To stay afloat on broken wreckage strive.
Ceyx himself instead of sceptre grasps
A shattered spar and calls with panting gasps
Upon his sire for aid, yet calls in vain ;
And, as he breasts the fierce tempestuous main
" Alcyone," he cries, and cries aloud again.

While he has strength to swim 'tis that dear name
His pallid lips amid the surges frame,
And to high heaven make their piteous prayer—
" Ye cruel waves, my lifeless body bear
To her I long for, that upon the strand
I may be buried by her loving hand."
Such was his final cry ; and when the strife
Of wind and water robbed him of his life
His last low murmur was " Alcyone, my wife."

Metam., XI, 537-567.

THE PALACE OF SLEEP

After the death of Ceyx, Juno takes compassion on Alcyone and Morpheus is sent in a dream to tell the wife of her husband's fate. The episode gives Ovid opportunity for one of his finest pieces of imaginative description.

THERE is a mountain in Cimmeria's lands
That holds within its sides a cavern deep.
Sunless at dawn, at noon, at eve it stands
The home and hiding-place of laggard sleep.
Soft coiling vapours breathe forth from the ground
And veils of darkness cast their shade around.

No wakeful cock upon its murky wall
With lifted crest proclaims the rising day;
No hissing geese give out their heedful call;
No watch-dog breaks the silence with his bay;
No wolves, no sheep, no human voices rude,
No rustling leaves disturb the quietude.

'Tis the abode of rest. Dark Lethe's stream
Invites to slumber, murmuring in the gloom,
With waters that themselves entrancèd seem ;
And by the entrance countless poppies bloom
From whose rich juices dewy night distils
Sleep, and the earth with drowsy effluence fills.

There is no doorway there whose creaking hinge
Might intermit the silence as it turns
And on the stillness of the night impinge,
No porter there his watchful taper burns.
But in the midmost cave is set a bed,
Dark hued and soft and with black covers spread.

Thereon the god himself a dreaming lies,
His limbs relaxed at ease in languorous rest,
While empty visions flit before his eyes
In endless company about him pressed,
Unnumbered as the sands beside the main,
As leaves upon the trees, as ears of grain.

To him fair Iris came and brushed aside
The phantom shapes that would have barred her way.
Awakened by the gleam the dull god sighed
And his closed eyes to open did essay.
And scarce at length from his own self set free
He asked :—'Why, maiden, hast thou come to me?'

'O Sleep, thou rest for all things, Sleep most kind,
Balm of the soul,' she said, 'who drivest grief
In flight, and solace for our toils canst find
So that in thee we ever have relief,
Fashion a dream and let it straightway go
And to Alcyone the shipwreck show."

Metam., XI, 592-628.

THE HOUSE OF RUMOUR

This is a companion picture to the description that precedes, and an equally good example of Ovid's powers of invention. Before the Greek hosts arrive at Troy, their approach is announced from Rumour's central exchange.

THERE is a place 'twixt land and sea and sky
Where close the confines of three empires lie.
Thence all things can be seen both far and near,
And every sound comes to the listening ear.
Dame Rumour dwells upon that mountainside,
Her house with thousand entrances flung wide
And open night and day. Of noisy brass
Its walls are made and sounds bewildering pass
Backwards and forwards, echoed to and fro,
So that each single word is rendered two.

That house is never silent, never still;
And yet no noisy shouts its chambers fill.

But a dull murmur, like the ocean's roar
Reverberating on some distant shore,
Or the last rumblings of the thunder, when
Jove stirs the clouds in heaven to frighten men.
From hall to hall a shifting concourse hies,
Falsehoods and Truths, Imaginings and Lies.
One with vain gossip fills his idle ears,
Another carries forth the tales he hears ;
And by repeating make each story grow
Adding a little more than what they know.
Here is Rash Error, here is Fond Belief,
And Foolish Confidence, and Panic Grief,
And Sudden Strife, and Doubtful Whispering :
While Rumour borne aloft on busy wing
Sees all that's done in heaven and earth and sea
And searches the wide world for novelty.

Metam., XII, 39-63.

THE CENTAUR LOVERS

The Twelfth Book of the Metamorphoses *ostensibly treats of the same subject as the* Iliad, *the fighting of the Greek army before Troy. But actually most of the book is occupied by Nestor's long story of the contest between the Centaurs and the Lapithae at the marriage feast at Pirithoüs. The most effective episode in his narrative here follows.*

If to a Centaur beauty we allow
Then Cyllarus was beautiful, I trow.
His beard was golden-red, just newly grown,
And on his shoulders golden locks hung down.
His face was bright and keen: his stalwart breast,
Shoulders and arms and neck and all the rest
Of man about him by a sculptor's art
Seemed to be fashioned, and the equine part
Was equal thereunto, for Castor meet
If he were all a horse, so for the seat
His back was shaped, so firm the muscles rose
Upon his brawny shoulders as he goes.

Blacker than pitch was he, yet white of tail
And white legged too. Full many a female
Of his own race had wooed him, but alone
Hylonomë had won him for her own.
Fairest was she of all the Centaur kind
Who dwell within the forest, fair and kind;
And by the love which freely she confessed
She, and no other, Cyllarus possessed.

She did not scorn the toilet's artful aid,
So far as toilet suits a Centaur maid.
Oft would she comb her tresses: oft entwine
Roses and violets and rosemarine
About her head, and often would she wear
A wreath of snow-white lilies in her hair.
Twice every day she washed her rosy cheeks
Beside the brook that from the mountain seeks
The plain of Pagasae, and twice did lave
Her comely body in the rippling wave;
While for her dress with anxious care she chose
The most becoming skins of dappled does.

So Cyllarus and she in equal love
Would rest together and together rove,
United in the woods and in their home,
And now together to the feast had come.
As the fight raged they battled side by side
When lo, a spear—whence thrown I ne'er espied—
Pierced through the Centaur's breast, his neck beneath,
And touched his heart, and straightway brought him death.

His wife drew out the shaft and in her arm
Took his poor body, and with kisses warm
Sought to hold back the life that ebbed away
And with fond hand the rushing blood to stay.
But when she felt that his last breath had fled
And saw her love before her stricken dead
She cried aloud—her words I could not hear—
And flung herself upon the deadly spear.
And so by death united in one place
They lay together in their last embrace.

Metam., XII, 393-428.

THE CYCLOPS IN LOVE

The ingenuity of the Alexandrian poets turned the savage Polyphemus into a love-lorn swain. Ovid follows them to some extent, but makes the giant revert to his wonted cruelty. The story is told by the nymph Galatea, "The milk white maid," who, in the arms of Acis, listens to the Cyclops' song, familiar to English ears in Handel's setting, and is witness of her lover's death.

A WEDGE-SHAPED headland runs into the deep,
On either side the billows foam and leap;
Hither the Cyclops climbed, and had no mind
To tend his sheep who followed close behind,
But careless sat him down. Before his feet
He threw the pine-tree, for a ship's mast meet,
That served him as a staff upon his way,
And on his shepherd's pipe began to play.
Its hundred reeds re-echoed all around,
The mountains and the ocean felt the sound,

And as I lay within my distant cave,
Rocked in my Acis' arms beside the wave,
The song he sang came to me on the breeze,
Still I remember it, in words like these :—

" My Galatea is more white
Than privet flowers, than glass more bright ;
Alders are not so slim and tall,
Or frolic kids so gay withal ;
She is more smooth than sea-worn shells,
More blooming than the meadow dells.

The winter's sun, the summer's shade
Are not so welcome as my maid :
The crystal ice is not so clear,
The plane so noble, fruit so dear.
Sweeter than grapes that ripe have grown,
More soft than curdled milk or down,
More fair than watered gardens she,
If only she were kind to me.

But Galatea's wilder far
Than untamed cattle ever are,
More false than water, hard than oak,
More boisterous than a rushing brook,
Tougher than vines or willows prove,
And harder than these rocks to move.

More fierce than fire, than the wave
More deaf if you her mercy crave ;
A peacock praised is not so vain,
Nor thorns so sharp your flesh to pain ;
A she-bear will more pity show,
A trodden snake more grace allow.
And—what is worst of all I find—
She can run swifter than the wind.

And yet if she the truth could guess
She would regret her hastiness,
Herself condemn her coy delay
And beg that I might constant stay ;
For on the hills my safe retreat
Knows not of cold nor summer's heat.

Apples, and on each trailing vine
Grapes gold and purple—all are mine
And shall be hers : she may partake
Of berries in the forest brake,
Plums waxen pale and red beside,
If only she will be my bride.
Chestnuts and arbute she shall have
And every tree shall be her slave.

These are my sheep, and there are more
That feed along the hills and shore
And in my cavern have their stall.
Indeed I cannot count them all
If you of me their number ask :
Such reckoning is a poor man's task.
But without telling you can see
How full of milk their udders be.

Come listen to my humble prayer.
For Jupiter I have no care,

His thunder and his levin brand ;
But as your suppliant now I stand.
And tremble at a Nerëid maid,
I who of heaven was ne'er afraid.

I should not be quite so forlorn
If all men's love you held in scorn.
When you the Cyclops hateful find,
Why to young Acis are you kind ?
He may himself and you delight,
But let him come and test my might
And I will tear his limbs in twain
And scatter them upon your main.

For oh I rage, I boil, I burn !
I know not where my steps to turn.
With wrath and anger I'm possessed.
I feel deep down within my breast
A fierce volcano raging there—
But Galatea does not care ! "

Such was his vain complaints : and then he rose
And even as a bull in frenzy goes
When he has lost his mate and will not stay
But over hills and pastures makes his way,
So did the Cyclops in his fury haste
And coming on as we lay embraced
Expecting nothing less than him to see
He cried :—' This union your last shall be.'

His voice was such as suits a giant's frown.
High Etna shuddered. I in fear plunged down
Beneath the neighbouring waves. My Acis flies
And for assistance to his parents cries.
But the fierce Cyclops followed as he fled
And tore a mass of mountain from its bed
And hurled it at him. One piece of the stone
Fell on my Acis—and his life was done.

Metam., XIII, 778-804.

CIRCË'S VENGEANCE

One day a fisherman of Euboea named Glaucus noticed that the fish he had caught and flung on the grass, after nibbling the herbage came to life again and leaped into the sea. He himself tasted the grass with the result that he immediately turned into a merman and took up his dwelling in deep waters. In his new shape he fell in love with the maiden Scylla, and on her scorning his suit swam to Circë's island to ask the witch's help, with the result that is here told. The name Scylla means 'a small female dog', and may in itself be the origin of the legend.

And now the merman swimming through the foam
To Circë's magic palaces had come.
Full of wild creatures. First he greeting said
To the sun's daughter, then his prayer he made :—
'Take pity on a god, O queen divine,
For you alone can help this love of mine

If of your aid I to you worthy seem.
How great the power of herbs no man, I deem,
Knows more than I, who by their magic power
Was changed into this shape in one brief hour.

Now hear the reason why I seek your aid.
Hard by Messenë's walls I saw a maid,
Scylla her name, and straight enamoured fell.
My promises and prayers I blush to tell,
My flatteries, and how she spurned them all
And forced me thus on your strong might to call.
Give me a charm that shall her rigour bend
Or else some herb of magic potence lend,
Not one to drive this passion from my heart
But which shall force her too to bear her part.'

Then Circë answer made :—' 'Twere better far
To court some maid whose eager passions are
As burning as your own and whose love's fire
Flames with an equal fervour of desire.
You should be wooed, not wooer, and I know
You will be wooed, if you some hope allow.

Have faith in your own beauty. I confess
I, the sun's child, myself a god no less,
In spite of all my powers with herb and song
Ask now no more than that I should belong
To you. Scorn her who scorns, your lover love ;
And so to both alike a just judge prove.'

But Glaucus to her words of love replied :
' Sooner shall foliage grow beneath the tide
And seaweed on the lofty mountain side
Then I forget my Scylla : while she's here,
No other heart than her's can I hold dear.'
He spoke, and Circë with fierce rage was fired.
But since she could not hurt him,—nor desired
For still she loved him—on the girl she turned
The wrath wherewith her jealous hatred burned.

Uncanny herbs of magic strength she flung
Well-pounded in a pot and o'er them sung
A hellish charm ; then donned her bright array
And from her palace hastened on her way,
Leaving the fawning beasts, to Rhegium's shore
That faces Zanclë's rocks. The waves upbore

Her feet as on the rushing tide she trod
And o'er the watery ways she went dry shod.

There was a pool, with banks in crescent round,
Where Scylla ofttimes rest and shelter found
From the hot sky and sea, when in the height
The sun stood burning and with his fierce light
Drove every shade away. There Circë went
And its cool waves with magic poisons blent,
Scattering the baleful juices she had brewed
From deadly herbs in her dark solitude,
And then in wrath to bring the maiden harm
She muttered three times o'er a ninefold charm.

So when fair Scylla to the water came
And waded in the stream, foul things of shame
Loud-barking fastened on her milk-white waist,
Which she, not knowing they were round her
placed,
Sought to escape, or from the water fling;
But they from whom she flees still to her cling;
And gazing on her legs with startled eyes
She feels fierce dogs' heads there instead of thighs.

Metam., XIV, 8-67.

POMONA AND VERTUMNUS

The old Roman gods do not lend themselves very readily to poetical treatment. Janus, Flora, Ceres and the rest, are work-a-day divinities, each with his allotted task, as severely practical as were the people who worshipped them. But Ovid does his best, and in the story of Pomona and Vertumnus produces at least a charming fantasy.

When Procas in old Rome held sway
Of all the nymphs in his broad land
Pomona was most skilled, men say,
The growth of fruit to understand.
For woods and streams she had no care
But only for her garden fair.

Hence was her name. No spear she bore,
No javelin; but a pruning hook
With curvèd blade she ever wore,
Whose aid to curb the trees she took,
Or set a graft within and so
In old boughs make new juices flow.

Nor did she leave them parched and dry,
But to the roots of every tree
A trickling stream she would supply,
Making her work her joy to be.
No thought had she of love, but pent
Within her orchard lived content.

The leaping Satyrs oft essayed
To win her, and Silvanus too.
Oft the young Fauns their heads arrayed
With wreaths of pine-cones came to woo,
And he who does in gardens stand
With sickle armed and phallus wand.

But most of all Vertumnus burned
With passion never satisfied.
Into full many a shape he turned
That he might reach the maiden's side,
And gazed upon her with fond eyes
In this one or in that disguise.

Now as a reaper he would come,
His basket full of ripened ears ;
Now as a mower faring home
With temples hay-wreathed he appears.
And now a drover he would seem
Fresh from the stabling of his team.

Sometimes as a fruit-picker he
Would mount the trees on ladder high :
Sometimes a pruner feign to be
Or a leaf-gatherer's visage try.
A gallant soldier he would look,
A fisherman with rod and hook.

At last one day disguised he came,
Grey-haired, with coloured snood, and stick,
Seeming a bent and wrinkled dame,
And begged the nymph her fruit to pick :—
" Your trees ", he said, " most lovely are
" But you are lovelier by far."

Then, gazing at the comely maid
He kissed her thrice with warmer lips
Than suited with the part he played,
And on the grass beside her slips.
And as he praised the rosy fruit
Determined now to press his suit.

An elm-tree stood before them there
Within whose branches did entwine
With purple grapes most wondrous fair
The clusters of a spreading vine,—
" Were yonder tree unwed," he cried,
" 'Twould be but leaves and naught beside.

" And so the vine which now at rest
Lies sheltered on her husband's arm,
If she upon the ground were pressed
Would in the dust lose all her charm.
Why not therefrom example take
And for yourself a marriage make ?

"Ah, if you only would be kind!
A thousand suitors even now
Desire in you their bride to find
Would you to their entreaties bow.
No god in all this Alban land
But burns and longs to claim your hand.

"Shun not these joys, lest late you grieve.
Be wise and listen to my word:
I love you more than you believe;
Take young Vertumnus for your lord.
That is a match you ne'er will rue;
He will be husband staunch and true.

"He does not roam about the streets
Nor does he, like your other swains,
Court every maiden that he meets,
He constant to his home remains.
To none is he more known than me
And for him I give guarantee.

" You are his first and only love,
To you he will devote his days,
His manly vigour he will prove,
The native charm of all his ways.
He can assume what shape he will
And all you ask he will fulfil.

" The same delights both of you please
You can each other's pleasures share.
He ever is the first to seize
The fruit that is your chiefest care.
And ofttimes comes a-plundering
The gifts that from your bounty spring.

" But nothing now does he require
Of the sweet herbs your gardens own,
Nor has he of your fruit desire ;
He longs for you and you alone.
Take pity : think that he is near
And that these are his words you hear.

"Beware too lest your ways offend
The angry gods, and Nemesis
Upon you retribution send;
For Venus hates such pride as this.
There is a tale—I know it well—
Listen: and I that tale will tell."

(*Then follows the story of Iphis and Anaxaretë, given overleaf; which proving ineffectual, the god returns to his own shape, and Pomona, enchanted by his manly beauty, consents to his love.*)

Vertumnus spoke: yet spoke in vain;
And straight put off his woman's guise
And as a youth appeared again.
Bright as the sun when in the skies
His light has put the clouds to rout
And in full radiance he shines out.

The god was ready force to use :
No force he needed with those charms.
Pomona, when his form she views,
Falls of herself into his arms,
And smitten with an equal fire
Answers his love with her desire.

Metam., XIV, 623-771.

THE CRUEL MISTRESS

The tale of cruel Anaxaretë, the girl with the heart of stone, and of her luckless lover's death is pure romance, and belongs to the same family as many of the mediaeval love stories. Ovid tries, not very happily, to connect it with the temple of 'The Peeping Venus' in Cyprus, but really it is of universal application.

A HUMBLE swain once loved a proud princess
Nor dared at first his passion to confess.
But when no reasoning could his pain abate
He came as suppliant to the lady's gate,

And to her nurse revealed his hopeless love,
And then the other servants sought to move
With soft entreaties. Letters he would write
And beg that they be brought within her sight
Or else hang tear-wet garlands on her door
And lie stretched low upon the unyielding floor.
But she more cold than stone, more hard than steel,
Than waves more fierce, would no compassion feel—
And mocked his love with bitter words of scorn
Leaving him in despair, of hope forlorn.

At last the youth no more his pain could bear
And coming cried aloud for her to hear :—
'You are the victor : ne'er again shall I
Annoy you now'—and threw a rope on high
Over the door-posts which he oft had wreathed,
And ere he died this last sad utterance breathed.
'Perchance, O cruel, this poor offering
Of all I have will pleasure to you bring.

Now, now at least, your favour you will show
And to this deed some gratitude allow.
I thought of you alone.' So did he cry
In the last moment of his agony :
Then in the fatal noose he thrust his head
And with his face towards her hung there dead.

The servants bore the body to his home
And when the day of burial was come
His hapless mother led the funeral
With wailings through the city. Therewithal
The princess heard and to her window went
To learn the meaning of that loud lament.
But scarcely had she seen him as he lay
Stretched on the funeral pallet when straightway
Her eyes grew stiff and all the blood ran cold
Within her pulsing veins. A magic hold
Constrained her by the window to remain :
She tried to turn her eyes, but tried in vain,
And all her body changed to that hard stone
Which till that hour had held her heart alone.

Metam., XIV, 699-757.

THE POWER OF TIME

The narrative of the Metamorphoses *in its later stages becomes more serious and less entertaining. Books Twelve, Thirteen and Fourteen deal chiefly with the Trojan War and the early history of Italy, subjects which Virgil had already treated, and Ovid moves rather uneasily under the shadow of his great predecessor. In the last book of all, he introduces Pythagoras and from the philosopher's long discourse the following is a brief extract.*

From the great law of change we are not free
And what we seem to-night we shall not be
Upon to-morrow's dawn. There was a day
When in our mother's sheltering womb we lay
Mere seeds and hopes of man. Then nature wrought
With cunning hands and to the sunlight brought
The body pent within the maternal frame
And as a feeble babe to life we came.

At first upon all fours like beasts we went
And when we tried to walk for guidance leant
On some support and then with trembling knees
Began to toddle in our nurseries.
But soon we were more swift, to manhood grown,
And all too quick the middle years had flown
Ere feeble now and with declining strength
Down the hillside we came to age at length.
Time saps our vital force. Milo grown old
Can scarce endure his muscles to behold
That once with Hercules might well compare
And now hang loose and flabby, soft as air.
And so with Helen beauty swift must pass :
She sees the wrinkles in her looking-glass,
And knows that she is old, and sadly cries :—
'Behold the face that Love twice took for prize.'
O envious Age, O great devourer Time,
That mortals perish surely is your crime.
With your sharp tooth you gnaw all things away
And lingering bring them down in slow decay.

Metam., XV, 214-236.

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